

**MEDITERRÁN TANULMÁNYOK**  
**ÉTUDES SUR LA RÉGION**  
**MÉDITERRANÉENNE**

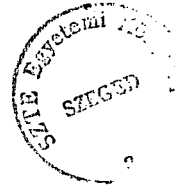
**XX.**

**UNIVERSITÉ DE SZEGED**  
Département d'Histoire Moderne  
et d'Études Méditerranéennes

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## ***Sigismondo di Lussemburgo e la campagna antiveneziana nella terza decade di Bonfini***

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Iam tempus exposcit, ut, quo pacto res Dalmatie decrescere ceperint in Venetorumque potestatem devenerint Sigismundi temporibus, breviter aperiamus<sup>1</sup>.

Con queste parole Antonio Bonfini apre il breve capitolo della terza decade dedicato alla campagna antiveneziana del 1411-13 del re dei Romani e d'Ungheria, Sigismondo di Lussemburgo.

L'espansione veneziana nella 'Patria del Friuli', che rappresentava per la Repubblica un'area strategica ed economica di significativa importanza ai fini del controllo delle vie di comunicazione tra l'Austria e il Nordest d'Italia, era stata agevolata dalla debolezza politica del Patriarcato d'Aquileia, che si era manifestata a partire dal 1350 dopo l'assassinio del patriarca Bertrando di Saint-Geniès e che culminò con l'elezione simultanea di due patriarchi: il filoveneziano Antonio Panciera, sostenuto dalla comunità di Udine, e Antonio da Ponte, appoggiato da Cividale<sup>2</sup>. Le mire di Venezia sul Friuli finirono ovviamente per cozzare oltrechè contro gli interessi del Patriarcato stesso, dominio temporale di una autorità ecclesiastica seconda soltanto al pontefice di Roma, anche contro quelli dell'Impero, di cui Aquileia era una delle sedi episcopali più prestigiose. Ciò divenne uno dei principali motivi di scontro tra la Serenissima e Sigismondo di Lussemburgo, dal 1387 re d'Ungheria e dal 1411 definitivamente re dei Romani, che andò a sommarsi al contenzioso sorto tra la Signoria e l'Ungheria da un lato per il possesso magiaro della Dalmazia, dall'altro per l'occupazione veneta di Feltre, Vicenza, Belluno, Padova e Verona, già territori

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<sup>1</sup> A. DE BONFINIS (ANTONIO BONFINI), *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, a cura di I. Fögel, B. Iványi e L. Juhász, t. III, Lipsiae 1936, decas III. liber III [in seguito: Bonfini], v. 205 (p. 66). Bonfini dedica non molto spazio della sua opera alla campagna antiveneziana: più precisamente i vv. 205-55 (pp. 66-69 dell'edizione qui utilizzata).

<sup>2</sup> Sulla storia del Patriarcato d'Aquileia si rimanda al volume di P. PASCHINI, *Storia del Friuli*, Udine 1975. In particolare sulla crisi del Patriarcato cfr. D. GIRGENSOHN, *La crisi del patriarcato d'Aquileia. Verso l'avvento della Repubblica di Venezia*, in «Il Quattrocento nel Friuli occidentale», vol. I, Pordenone 1996, pp. 53-68.

dell'Impero<sup>3</sup>. Il contenzioso s'era riaperto dopo il rifiuto della repubblica veneta di corrispondere al re magiario il tributo annuo di 7000 ducati fissato dalla pace di Torino, che aveva messo fine alla lunga guerra ungaro-veneta scoppiata al tempo di Luigi I d'Angiò<sup>4</sup>. Inoltre, il clima di crisi instauratosi tra Venezia e l'Ungheria era stato aggravato dal diniego espresso dalla Signoria alla concessione del permesso di transito attraverso i propri territori al re dei Romani, che doveva recarsi a Roma dal papa per l'incoronazione imperiale.

La conseguenza immediata di questa intricata situazione politica fu la discesa nel 1411 nel territorio della 'Patria' del Friuli di truppe straniere provenienti da Oltralpe sotto la guida dell'italoungherese Filippo Scolari. Filippo Scolari aveva ricevuto dal re Sigismondo il mandato di restaurare nelle regioni dell'Alta Italia l'autorità imperiale che la Serenissima aveva rimosso con la sua politica espansionistica<sup>5</sup>.

La politica di Venezia sarebbe bruscamente cambiata dopo l'invasione magiara del 1411, ma soprattutto nel 1418 alla scadenza della tregua quinquennale di Castellutto: la conquista e l'annessione del Friuli sarebbero divenuti l'obiettivo precipuo della guerra che la Serenissima aveva in un primo tempo condotto contro il re dei Romani e d'Ungheria per la conservazione dei suoi possedimenti dalmati e per la difesa di quelli di terraferma.

Bonfini ricorda come l'acquisto da parte di Venezia di Zara e dintorni per 100.000 ducati abbia risvegliato nella Repubblica il desiderio di recuperare tutto il resto della Dalmazia<sup>6</sup>. Per far ciò, Venezia aveva cominciato piano piano ad aizzare i dalmati (sudditi del re magiario) alla rivolta, a seminare discordie, a vessare le fazioni che le si opponevano, ad allettare i nobili con grandi promesse, a indebolire gli animi con vari mezzi, ad attrarre dalla propria parte gli indecisi<sup>7</sup>. Fin da questi primi versi si evince la posizione ovviamente antiveneziana dello storico ascolano, pronto fin dall'inizio a evidenziare i mezzi subdoli

<sup>3</sup> Nel 1405 la Repubblica aveva definitivamente estromesso dai loro domini veneti i della Scala e i da Carrara, signori rispettivamente di Verona e di Padova, estendendo così la propria sovranità sulla terraferma, ch'era però territorio del *Regnum Italicum*, e quindi dell'Impero. Cfr. al proposito I. RAULICH, *La caduta dei Carraresi*, Padova 1890.

<sup>4</sup> Nel 1409 Venezia aveva acquistato dall'ex re d'Ungheria Ladislao d'Angiò-Durazzo la città di Zara e i suoi dintorni (Pago, Laurana, Castelnuovo) per 100.000 ducati; ridivenuta padrona di gran parte della Dalmazia, s'era rifiutata di corrispondere all'Ungheria il tributo annuo di 7000 ducati impostole dalle clausole della pace di Torino del 24 agosto 1381, con cui s'era conclusa la sanguinosa guerra di Chioggia (1378-81). Sulla pace di Torino cfr. R. CESSI, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, vol. I, Milano 1968, pp. 330-2; G. WENZEL, *A turini békekötés* [La pace di Torino], in «Magyar Történelmi Társulat» (Budapest), 1862, pp. 3-124.

<sup>5</sup> Per quanto riguarda la prima fase (1411-13) della campagna antiveneziana di Sigismondo si rimanda ai lavori degli Autori, *Venezia e l'Ungheria nella guerra del 1411-13*, in «Studi Goriziani» (Gorizia), vol. XCIII-XCIV, 2001, pp. 33-53 e Pippo Spano nella 'Patria' del Friuli, in «Studia historica adriatica ac danubiana» (Duino Aurisina), I, n. 1, 2008, pp. 9-40. Cfr. anche, per un quadro di sintesi della campagna, il qui già citato libro di PASCHINI, *Storia del Friuli*, pp. 715-22.

<sup>6</sup> «Cum a Ladislao Apulie rege ladram Veneti acceperissent, quam cum agro et appendicibus centum milibus aureum se mercatores esse profitentur, ad recuperandam reliquam Dalmatie oram animum adiecerunt». BONFINI, v. 206 (p. 66).

<sup>7</sup> «Sollicitare sensim populos ad defectionem, discordie semina passim serere, vexare factiones et magnis nobilibus plerosque promissis allicere, variis artibus hominum animos infirmare, nutantes ad se trahere». Ivi, v. 207 (p. 66).



usati dalla Serenissima per realizzare il suo intento di recuperare le terre dalmate (e a conquistare in seguito anche quelle friulane).

Le manovre occulte dei veneziani ebbero infine successo; nella città dalmata di Sebenico si costituirono infatti due partiti: quello della nobiltà che aderì a Venezia, quello del popolo che rimase fedele al re magiario-croato. Il popolo, allora, constatato che la nobiltà aveva defezionato in massa, prese subito le armi contro di essa, ne uccise i più, cacciò gli altri dalla città e assunse il potere. I nobili, banditi dalla città, implorarono l'aiuto dei veneziani, cui promisero la loro dedizione. Il Senato veneto, spinto dall'avidità di conquista e di potere, promise l'aiuto richiesto, e in un primo tempo inviò quattro triremi affiancate da cinquanta piccoli navigli alla volta della Dalmazia<sup>8</sup>. Allorché i veneziani iniziarono l'assedio di Sebenico, difesa da un munitissimo presidio magiario, i suoi abitanti, usciti con gli ungheresi dalla città, affrontarono gl'invasori, molti dei quali morirono nel tentativo di espugnare le mura. L'assalto si sarebbe concluso lo stesso giorno col successo dei difensori, se i veneziani non si fossero rifugiati sulle loro navi<sup>9</sup>. I veneziani, consapevoli che non avrebbero avuto ragione della resistenza degli abitanti di Sebenico se non avessero ricevuto in rinforzo delle truppe di terra, ne fecero esplicita richiesta al Senato. La richiesta venne accolta e fu inviato sul posto Ludovico Buzzacarini con l'incarico di assalire la città con impegno e con forza sia dal mare che da terra. Il Buzzacarini, giunto a Sebenico, provvide a chiudere tutti gli accessi alla città, in modo che non vi potessero affluire né vettovaglie né munizioni<sup>10</sup>. Durante l'assedio, i veneziani, per uscire dalla difficile situazione, mandarono un'ambasceria a Sigismondo nelle persone di Giovanni Barbo e Tommaso Mocenigo. Fallito questo tentativo di composizione del contenzioso, il Senato perorò la propria causa presso il papa Giovanni XXIII<sup>11</sup>.

La Signoria aveva dunque cercato di conquistare con la forza, ma anche con gli intrighi, Sebenico e (ma il Bonfini non ne parla) Traù, dopo aver acquistato la fortezza di Ostrovizza

<sup>8</sup> "Quare Sicensens paulo post tempore intestina dissensione laborare ceperunt; due in urbe factiones oborte, Pannonum fidem retinebant reliqui. Cum a Pannonibus nobilitatem defecisse multitudo vidisset, extemplo facto tumulti in eam arma capit et plerisque cesis urbe eiicit reique publice gubernationem capessit. Optimates exacti ad Venetorum opes configiunt, a senatu facta deditione auxilium implorant; ob imperandi cupiditatem senatus id ultro pollicetur, primo tempore triremes quattuor cum parvis quinquaginta navigiis in Dalmatiam mittit". Ivi, vv. 208-10 (p. 66).

<sup>9</sup> "Contra Sicensens per totam hiemem Pannonica auxilia sollicitarant, validissimo Ungarorum presidio urbem muniverant. Cum Sicum Veneti oppugnare cepissent, prosilientes ex urbe cives cum Ungaris ita Venetos inclinarunt, ut, nisi illi se in classem continuo recepissent, eo de his die actum foret; cecidere tamen multi, qui in litus egressi subire menia tentavere". Ivi, vv. 211-12 (p. 66).

<sup>10</sup> "Cum tenui Sicum apparatu expugnari haudquaquam posse intuerentur, senatui repente significarunt maioribus id virtutibus adoriri oportere neque sine terrestribus copiis capi posse. Lodovicum Bucecharinum misere patres, cui copie cum supplemento date et mandatum, ut summo studio ac vi terra iuxta atque mari civitatem oppugnaret. Postquam Sicum perventum est, Lodovicus urbem obsidet, omnis aditus dispositis circum militum stationibus obcludit, quin et turres erigit presidiaque imponit, ne arma, subsidia commeatusque importari possent". Ivi, vv. 213-15 (pp. 66-67).

<sup>11</sup> "Dum pertinaci urbes obsidione vexatur, legati a senatu in Ungariam mittuntur, ut hanc cum Sigismundo causam componerent. Ioannes Barbus et Thomas Mocenigus legati fuere; cum in Pannoniam venissent, quia de re molesta agebatur, multos in contentione dies contrivere. Ad extremum, dum se per omnia versant, cum nihil inter eos convenire posset, utrique ex composito Sicensensem causam Ioanni summo pontifici delegarunt". Ivi, vv. 216-18 (p. 67).

(13 aprile 1411) dal voivoda bosniaco Halić Sandalj, che all'inizio dell'anno aveva astutamente inserito nel proprio patriziato. La Signoria giustificò come legittimo davanti a Sigismondo l'acquisto di Ostrovizza, dato che riteneva quella fortezza proprietà bosniaca e non magiara, anche allo scopo di difenderla dagli ottomani<sup>12</sup>.

“Dum hec geruntur – scrive Bonfini –, non multo post Pipus Florentinus Scolariorum familia natus, quem Philippum dicimus, cum decem milibus equitum a Sigismundo missus in Italiam Venetos fines invasit”<sup>13</sup>. Dunque, mentre aveva luogo l'assedio di Sebenico, scese in Italia un forte e agguerrito esercito magiara al comando del fiorentino Filippo Scolari<sup>14</sup>, del voivoda di Transilvania, Stibor Stiborici, e del conte Federico di Ortenburg; in effetti, il vero comandante dell'esercito italiano fu Filippo Scolari, nominato da Sigismondo (insieme col conte di Ortenburg) anche procuratore imperiale plenipotenziario per Aquileia e il Friuli<sup>15</sup>; il conte di Ortenburg e Stibor Stiborici rimasero praticamente nell'ombra (e in effetti neanche il Bonfini ne parla). Nel frattempo, Sigismondo aveva spedito in Dalmazia un secondo esercito, guidato dal vescovo di Zagabria, Eberhard, e da suo cugino, Petermann Medvei Albeni, bano di Croazia e Dalmazia. L'offensiva ungherese aveva quindi due obiettivi: uno in Dalmazia, l'altro in Friuli, ma anche in Istria e nel Veneto; tuttavia, il vero campo di battaglia sarà quello istriano e, soprattutto, quello dell'Italia Nordorientale.

Torniamo alla guerra in Friuli. “Belli huius causam Foroiuliensium Carnorumque discordias plerique suspicantur – scrive Bonfini –, cum ex his alii Venetis, Pannoni Aquileienses antistiti alii parere studerent. Nimirum Dalmatia motus huiusce causa fuit, quippe que non modo Pipum prefectum legionis, verum etiam et Sigismundum ipsum in hanc expeditionem adegit. Is enim, quod Lodovicus quondam socer eius [Luigi I d'Angiò, detto il Grande, n.d.a.] tanto sudore ac impendio compararat, facile amittere non poterat”<sup>16</sup>. Giustamente Bonfini attribuisce il motivo della spedizione friulana, per la quale era stato nominato Filippo Scolari comandante e che avrebbe visto la partecipazione dello stesso re Sigismondo (lo storico ascolano non accenna però alla discesa in Italia dello stesso re dei Romani), alle discordie e alle divisioni interne al patriarcato aquileiese, i cui feudatari erano incerti tra l'adesione a Venezia e la fedeltà al patriarca, che lo storico ascolano chiama “Pannonius Aquileienseis” intendendo con ciò legittimare l'appartenenza della ‘Patria del Friuli’ all'Impero romano-germanico, cui Sigismondo non intendeva facilmente rinunciare. Bonfini individua però un'altra causa della guerra nell'acquisto di Zara e nell'assedio di Sebenico da parte di Venezia, oltretutto nell'espansione della Serenissima nella terraferma e nella conseguente espropriazione delle terre dei principi locali, uno dei quali, Brunoro della

<sup>12</sup> Sull'acquisto di Ostrovizza e sulle mire veneziane verso Traù e Sebenico si vedano i documenti riportati nei *Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium* [in seguito: *Mon. Slav. Mer.*], a cura di S. Ljubič, vol. IX (*Listine VI*), Zagrabiae 1878, *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> BONFINI, v. 219 (p. 67).

<sup>14</sup> Su Filippo Scolari si veda la monografia degli Autori, *Pippo Spano. Un eroe antiturco antesiganno del Rinascimento*, Mariano del Friuli 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. G. WENZEL (a cura di), *Okmánytár Ozorai Pipo történetéhez* [Raccolta di documenti sulla storia di Ozorai Pipo], in «Történelmi Társulat» (Budapest), 1884, n. 32, pp. 230-32. Sui comandanti dell'esercito magiara cfr. pure W. ALTMANN (a cura di), *Die Urkunden Kaiser Sigmunds*, in *Regesta Imperii*, a cura di J.F. Böhm, Innsbruck 1896-1900, vol. XI, n. 144, p. 9, n. 144.

<sup>16</sup> BONFINI, vv. 220-22 (p. 67).

Scala, si era appunto rifugiato a Buda, alla corte di Sigismondo, per impetrarne aiuto e collaborazione onde recuperare i domini perduti<sup>17</sup>.

Veniamo all'arrivo di Filippo Scolari in Friuli. Bonfini mette in evidenza il passaggio dalla parte dei veneziani del notevole udinese Tristano (Federico in Bonfini) di Savorgnano, e della sua fazione<sup>18</sup>, la dedizione della comunità di Udine al re Sigismondo<sup>19</sup> e le prime conquiste dello Scolari di Serravalle (24-26 dicembre), Belluno (27 dicembre), Feltre (29 dicembre) e Motta di Livenza (inizio di gennaio 1412)<sup>20</sup>. A questo punto, Bonfini, ricorda l'improvviso e impreveduto rientro dello Scolari in Ungheria attribuendolo all'oro dei veneziani da cui il condottiero toscano s'era lasciato corrompere; tornato in Ungheria, lo Scolari fu fatto uccidere da Sigismondo, che gli fece colare oro fuso nella bocca<sup>21</sup>.

Del tradimento di Filippo Scolari ne parla per primo Marc'Antonio Sabellico nelle *Historiae*: "Consta che Pippo, dopo gloriose imprese militari, corrotto (si dice) dall'oro veneto abbandonò la provincia e fece ritorno in Pannonia, dove fu ucciso dal re che gli fece colare l'oro fuso nella bocca"<sup>22</sup>. Al Sabellico fece eco Pietro Giustiniani (*Rerum Venetarum Historia, Libri XIII*, Venezia 1560, lib. IV, p. 186), che tuttavia omise il "si dice". In linea col Sabellico e con Bonfini è il biografo di Sigismondo, Eberhart Windecke, il quale scrive testualmente: "Lo stesso Pippo si fece corrompere dai veneziani con due bottiglie di

<sup>17</sup> "Adauserat indignitatem Iadra a Ladislao vendita et Sici obsidio. Irritabat quoque ad id bellum Brunorius Scala, qui patrium dominatum Sigismundi ope recuperare sperabat". Ivi, v. 223 (p. 67). Anche l'ex signore di Padova, Marsilio da Carrara, si era rifugiato a Buda alla corte di Sigismondo.

<sup>18</sup> Il 17 gennaio 1412 il Parlamento della Patria del Friuli, riunitosi nel Castello di Udine, decretò l'espulsione dalla città di Tristano, dei suoi due figli, della consorte e dei suoi uomini più fidati. Il Savorgnano perse ogni bene di sua proprietà, tra cui numerosi castelli; furono strappati i suoi stendardi e fu tolta in diversi luoghi della città l'arme della sua famiglia. Fu anche promulgato un decreto secondo cui tutti i possessori di biade, vini e altri beni mobili di Tristano e Francesco di Savorgnano e di alcuni loro partigiani dovevano consegnare entro tre giorni tutte le merci al capitano della città sotto pena di dover pagare, in caso di disobbedienza, il doppio del loro valore e di essere condannati per furto. Il 12 febbraio 1412 il Comune di Udine interdì a tutti i suoi cittadini di mettersi in contatto, per iscritto o verbalmente, col Savorgnano e con la sua famiglia; tre giorni dopo promise addirittura il pagamento d'una taglia di 500 ducati a chi glielo avesse consegnato morto. Sul decreto di bando cfr. P.S. LEICHT, *Parlamento friulano*, vol. I, parte II, Bologna 1925, n. 464, pp. 423-27.

<sup>19</sup> Pier Silverio Leicht (*Studi di storia friulana*, Udine 1955, p. 86) ritiene che gli ungheresi siano entrati in città il 3 dicembre 1411 e che il 6 dicembre successivo sia invece avvenuto il passaggio dei poteri tra lo Scolari, plenipotenziario di Sigismondo, e Paolo Glovicer, luogotenente del conte di Ortenburg per il Friuli.

<sup>20</sup> "Cum Pipus igitur in Italiam Sigismundi iussu primum erupisset, Fredericus Savorgnanus cum universa factione sua transivit ad venetos. Utinenses Pannoni se dederunt. Ille recepto Utino in Taurisinorum fines castra movit, Venetis Serevallum, Bellunum, Feltrum ac Metam abstulit". BONFINI, vv. 225-26 (p. 67).

<sup>21</sup> "Demum, cum multa preclare hic facinora gessisset, auro demum a Veneto corruptus dimissa provincia in Ungariam reversus est. Quem detecta viri avaritia Sigismundus infuso in os auro, ut aiunt, enecari iussit". Ivi, v. 227 (p. 67).

<sup>22</sup> "[...] satis constat, Pipum post praeclara belli facinora auro (ut dicitur) corruptum omitta provincia in Pannonia redisse: quem Barbarus ad se reversum liquefacto auro necavit. Nec ita multo post cum quadraginta Barbarorum millibus eum in Italiam venisse. Sed alii numerum magnopere extenuant". M.A.C. SABELLICO, *Historiae Rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita Libri XXXIII. in IV. Decades Distribuiti*, Basileae 1661, dec. II, lib. IX, p. 345.

malvasia riempite di ducati d'argento"<sup>23</sup>. Del tradimento di Filippo Scolari, dell'oro fuso colato nelle sue fauci, delle bottiglie di malvasia riempite di ducati non ne parla il primo biografo di Filippo, l'Anonimo fiorentino; Jacopo di Poggio annota invece che lo Spano decise di far ritorno in Ungheria al sopraggiungere dell'inverno non avendo ricevuto i rinforzi promessigli dal suo re, anche se non mancarono i detrattori, come Brunoro della Scala e Marsilio da Carrara, che lo accusarono presso Sigismondo d'esser stato corrotto dal denaro dei veneziani. Ne parla anche Domenico Mellini ma solo con l'intento di discolparlo dall'indecorosa accusa, recando in sua difesa numerosi e validi documenti. Scrive testualmente il Mellini:

Avendo, come si disse Filippo travagliato e danneggiato assai li Viniziani, et essendosi in Ungaria ritornato, fu da Marsilio et da Pierbrunoro imputato, benché a torto, et calunniato appo di Gismondo di avere ricevuto denari da' Viniziani, et di essersi lasciato corrompere da loro; allegando di ciò esserne segno il non si essere egli impadronito di Padova et di Verona come averia potuto fare, se pure X giorni più fusse stato in Lombardia, essendovi le parti, le quali ribellandosi a' Viniziani, volentieri avrebbero quelle città date in suo potere. La onde Filippo sentitosi toccare nell'onore, come quegli che alla sola et vera gloria aspirava, non potendo comportare tanta ingiuria, et tutto di quell'ira accesi, la quale è lo sprone della fortezza, giurò che la vegnente primavera vi sarebbe tornato, et non dieci, ma venti giorni et un mese avrebbe in quei luoghi alloggiato l'essercito, ne' quali egli non era scorso, né si era accampato, per paura che egli avesse avuto, non perché e' fusse stato corrotto con denari, né con altro, o avesse mancato della dovuta fede al suo Signore; ma per non macchiare la fama di lui, et offendere la maestà imperiale<sup>24</sup>.

Molto verosimilmente Filippo Scolari rientrò in Ungheria perché malato (era già gravemente ammalato di gotta e di tale malattia sarebbe morto il 26 dicembre 1426); segnala infatti la *Cronaca Bellunese* citata da Giambattista nella *Storia della Marca Trevigiana*, tomo XIX, Venezia 1791, pp. 64-65 (racconto): "la salute sua alterata da' disagi della guerra lo obbligasse a ritirarsi da quella provincia". La *Cronaca Dolfina* e Marino Sanuto, che la cita, attribuiscono chiaramente la partenza dello Spano dal Friuli alla sua malattia: il 13 febbraio "per una malattia, che venne a Pipo di Firenze Capitano degli Ungheri, si fece portar egli in una bara in Ungheria"<sup>25</sup>. Anche nell'anonima *Cronaca Veneta dal 1252 al 1434 (Origine delle Famiglie Patrizie e Cronaca Veneta dall'Anno 1252 sino all'Anno 1434)*, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, sez. manoscritti, Venezia, Classe It. VII 79 (8025), si legge alla data del 13 febbraio 1412: "Pipo capitano de' Ongari adi 13 Fevrer 1412. Siando lui molto aggravato de malatia se fece metter sora una bara con 4 cavaì, e fecesi menar in Ongaria, e fece della so gente parte l'una mandò per la via de Sacil,

<sup>23</sup> "[Pipo] liess [sich] do die Venediger mieten [stechen] mit zwein überguldeten silbern fleschen mit Malmoyssy [Malmasie], doch so worent es dukaten". E. WINDECKE, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigismunds*, a cura di W. Altmann, Berlin 1893, cap. VII, p. 11.

<sup>24</sup> D. MELLINI, *Vita di Filippo Scolari chiamato volgarmente Pippo Spano*, Firenze 1606, pp. 56-57.

<sup>25</sup> M. SANUTO, *Vitae Ducum Venetorum Italice Scriptae ab Origine Urbis, in Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, a cura di L.A. Muratori, vol. XXII, Mediolani 1733, coll. 556-879: 861.

l'altra per la via de Brugnara, l'altra per la via del Friul, e la quarta parte lui lassà per fortezza che lui havea prexo havendo intention de tornar a tempo novo in Trevixana con mazor exercito de pocho che lui era vegnudo". E ancora la cronaca veneta anonima raccolta da Teodoro Correr e conservata nell'omonimo fondo (*Cronaca veneta fino al 1433*, Biblioteca Correr, Venezia, Ms. I, n. 267, Fondo Correr n. 873) attribuisce la partenza dello Spano alla malattia: "Pipo capetanio de ongari adì 14 Fevrer 1411 [*sic*] se infermò de una grande infermità e sopra una sbara se fece portar in Ongaria", mentre la cronaca di Niccolò Trevisan si limita a constatare che "il dì 13 Fevrer" con 200 ungari il Nostro tornò in Friuli lasciando "munita le castella prese" e "da lì fece ritorno in Ongaria"<sup>26</sup>.

Antonio Bonfini riprende pari passo il racconto del Sabellico, limitandosi a sostituire l'"ut dicitur" con un "ut aiunt"; smentisce altresì la morte dello Scolari ricordando il suo ritorno in Friuli a capo di 40.000 uomini, di molti meno secondo altre fonti<sup>27</sup>. Che il Bonfini abbia conosciuto questa vicenda dal Sabellico si evince dal fatto che i due storici furono in corrispondenza; esistono infatti 12 lettere scambiate tra il Bonfini e il Sabellico tra il 1492 e 1493, periodo del soggiorno a Ferrara dello storico ascolano. Nella tredicesima lettera, datata 1498, il Sabellico chiese al Bonfini di mandargli il commentario di storia ungherese che lui aveva testè redatto<sup>28</sup>.

Bonfini tratta quindi molto succintamente il resto della campagna veneta ricordando l'assoldamento da parte dei veneziani dell'esperto condottiero Carlo Malatesta (24 aprile 1412) come capo dell'esercito e accennando alla cruentissima battaglia combattuta presso la Motta il 24 agosto 1412<sup>29</sup> e agli atti di crudeltà compiuti dai magiari, che estraevano ai prigionieri gli occhi dalle orbite e li mutilavano degli arti<sup>30</sup>. In mezzo a tali e tanti atti di atrocità il Senato veneto si decise alfine a inviare ambasciatori a Sigismondo nelle persone di Francesco Foscari, Tommaso Mocenigo e Antonio Contarini, che si accordarono col re dei Romani per una tregua quinquennale<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> N. TREVISAN, *Cronaca Veneziana*, Biblioteca Correr, Venezia, Ms. I, n. 229, Fondo Correr, n. 1327.

<sup>27</sup> "Sed, cum prefecti sui cupiditate victorie successum interceptum esse intellexisset, instauratis exercitibus in Italiam venit; ex quadraginta hominum milibus exercitum conflasse plerique tradidere, multo minus alii referunt. In Carnos primum is erupit". BONFINI, vv. 228-29 (p. 67).

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. *Attorno a Marco Antonio Sabellico: I. Di una corrispondenza fra Antonio Bonfini e il Sabellico e di una dimora del Bonfini a Ferrara*, in G. MERCATI, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti*, Città del Vaticano 1939, pp. 1-9.

<sup>29</sup> La battaglia della Motta fu uno degli scontri più duri e sanguinosi che si siano combattuti in quella guerra; alla fine prevalsero i veneziani, ma il Malatesta, gravemente ferito sul campo, fu costretto a lasciare il comando della condotta al fratello Pandolfo. Sulla battaglia della Motta ci limitiamo a far riferimento al *Chronicon Tarvisinum ab Anno 1368 usque ad Annum 1428*, col. 837 di A. REDUSIO, edito da L.A. MURATORI in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, t. XIX, Mediolani 1731, coll. 737-866. Il Redusio fu uno dei partecipanti di questa campagna militare.

<sup>30</sup> "Veneti Carolum Malatestam conducere virum longa rerum experientia et bellica disciplina valde polentem. In agro sepe Feltrensi Taurisonoque manu consertum est et cruentissima quandoque pugna dimicatum. Ungarorum sevitiam hic plerique commemorant, quia, quicumque bello superfuissent, oculis orbassent aut mutilatis manibus dimisissent". BONFINI, vv. 229-31 (p. 67).

<sup>31</sup> "In tanta belli crudelitate legati tres iterum ad Sigismundum a senatu missi; Franciscus Foscarius, Thomas Mocenicus et Antonius Cornarius fuere oratores, qui cum rege Pannonie quinquennales indutias confecerunt". Ivi, v. 232 (p. 67). La tregua fu firmata a Castelletto o Castellutto, vicino a

Le ostilità tra Venezia e il re dei Romani si riaccessero contestualmente alla scadenza della tregua quinquennale<sup>32</sup>. Tuttavia, già prima della scadenza della stessa, Sigismondo aveva dato ordine al patriarca Ludovico di Teck di convocare il Parlamento della 'Patria' per definire l'arruolamento di nuove truppe per la difesa del patriarcato<sup>33</sup>. Lo svevo Ludovico di Teck, cognato del conte Federico di Ortenburg, aveva sostituito Antonio Panciera alla guida del patriarcato aquileiese proprio nel culmine dello svolgimento della guerra del 1411-13; era stato eletto dal capitolo aquileiese e solennemente investito della nuova dignità nel Duomo di Cividale dallo stesso conte di Ortenburg e dal conte di Gorizia, Enrico IV, in nome dell'Impero.

Bonfini accenna a delle ostilità sorte tra Ludovico di Teck e la comunità udinese, la quale, contro la volontà del patriarca, propendeva per riaccogliere gli esuli del partito di Tristano Savorgnano, necessari per la difesa della città dal paventato ma ormai atteso attacco veneziano<sup>34</sup>. Udine si sentiva infatti in gran pericolo di fronte a un eventuale attacco veneto, soprattutto a causa delle mene di Tristano di Savorgnano, il quale, bandito dalla sua città e colpito da una condanna capitale, era intenzionato più che mai a recuperare le proprietà che gli erano state confiscate. Ludovico di Teck non risiedeva però nella 'Patria', dato che non aveva ancora ricevuto la conferma papale, anche se fin dal 1412 agiva da principe angariando – sostiene il Liruti – le terre di Tristano di Savorgnano e riducendo il valore intrinseco della moneta aquileiese per "isfamare quei soldati Ungari, ch'egli chiamava a finir di rodere la provincia"<sup>35</sup>. Soltanto dopo aver ottenuto la conferma da parte del nuovo papa Martino V, eletto dal Concilio di Costanza, Ludovico di Teck poté tornare in Friuli alla fine di marzo del 1418, e Sigismondo non tardò a rinnovargli la fiducia assegnandogli in feudo le contee di Ortenburg e Sternberg, rimaste vacanti dopo la morte

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Latisana, il 17 aprile 1413: essa stabiliva lo *status quo*, ovverosia che ciascuno dei contraenti sarebbe rimasto per cinque anni nei territori occupati; Venezia quindi mantenne Zara e Sebenico, Sigismondo Traù con alcune fortezze vicine e indirettamente Spalato con tre isole, su cui esercitava la propria giurisdizione il principe Hervoja Vukčić, anche se questi non era un vassallo affidabile e leale. Fu consentito a Sigismondo il libero transito attraverso i domini veneti in occasione del progettato viaggio romano per l'incoronazione imperiale. Fu garantita l'apertura di tutti i passi alpini affinché fosse permesso ai mercanti da e per il Veneto di transitarvi liberamente. Venezia infine sarebbe dovuta intervenire nel caso in cui Tristano Savorgnano o qualche altro suo collegato avesse rotto la tregua. Sulla tregua cfr. *Mon. Slav. Mer. cit.*, vol. XII (*Listine VII*), Zagrabiae 1882, pp. 104-05.

<sup>32</sup> "Ne diu quidem id otium permansit, in Carnis iterum bellum suscitatur; Utinensium factiones in causa fuere. Lodovicus Thechius, qui eo tempore Aquileiensis ecclesie antistes erat. totam Carnorum regionem, que Liquentia [*Livenza, n.d.a.*] Timavoque, item Alpibus Adriaticoque mari continetur, sub dicion sua regebat". BONFINI, vv. 233-34, pp. 67-68. Per quanto riguarda la ripresa della guerra nel 1418 si veda il saggio di A. PAPO – G. Nemeth, *L'Ungheria e la fine del Patriarcato d'Aquileia*, in «Ambra. Percorsi di italianistica» (Szombathely), IV, n. 4, 2003, pp. 312-28. Per un quadro d'insieme sulla ripresa della guerra e la fine dello stato patriarcale si rimanda all'omonimo capitolo del libro di PIO PASCHINI, *Storia del Friuli*, pp. 729-46.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. P. S. LEICHT, *Il Parlamento friulano nel primo secolo della dominazione veneziana*, in «Rivista del diritto italiano», XXI, 1948, p. 514.

<sup>34</sup> "Cum inter Ludovicum et Utinenses discordia propter exules oboriretur, quia hi Savorgnane factionis homines, qui ad Venetos superiore bello defecerant ac idcirco patria carebant, in eam restituere nitebantur, contra ille nimium observari ac dicere se nullo id pacto permissurum; hinc ingens est orta seditio". BONFINI, v. 235 (p. 68).

<sup>35</sup> Cfr. G. G. LIRUTI, *Notizie delle cose del Friuli*, Udine 1776, vol. V, p. 170.

del *vicedomino* Federico e nominandolo suo vicario generale in Friuli e nella Marca Trevigiana<sup>36</sup>.

Attaccato dai veneziani – riprendiamo il racconto di Bonfini –, i quali, presa nel frattempo Sacile, cercavano di ottenere la dedizione delle altre città friulane usando l'arte del seminar discordie, il patriarca Ludovico chiese aiuto a Sigismondo, e, ottenutolo, passò con 4000 uomini e una valida cavalleria ad assediare Cividale, che aveva accettato la protezione della Repubblica<sup>37</sup>. Le truppe magiare non riuscirono a prendere Cividale, ben difesa da un presidio veneziano, ma si limitarono a metterne a ferro e a fuoco i dintorni, prima di rientrare in patria all'inizio dell'inverno insieme con lo stesso patriarca<sup>38</sup>. Durante lo stesso inverno i veneziani, sotto il comando di Filippo Arcelli di Piacenza, recuperarono tutte le località venete (Feltre e Belluno *in primis*) che avevano perduto nella precedente guerra, entrarono in Friuli, presero Prata, assediaron Udine tentandovi di entrare grazie alla collaborazione di alcuni partigiani del Savorgnano che avevano aperto loro la porta di San Gottardo. Ma, scoppiato un gran tumulto, furono alfine respinti e i partigiani del Savorgnano in parte uccisi in parte espulsi<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. F.B.M. De Rubeis, *Monumenta Ecclesiae Aquilejenses, Argentinae (Venetiis) 1740*, pp. 1040-42.

<sup>37</sup> "Interea Sacilium a Venetis occupatur. Lodovicus cum gravissimo sibi hoste rem fore ratus ad Sigismundi opes confugit. Veneti, cum occasionem invadende regionis perquam idoneam oblatam esse conspicerent, quibus possunt, artibus discordias foveant, Cividatenses ad se deficientes gestiente animo in fidem accipiunt. Paulo post Lodovicus cum Ungarorum auxiliis advenit, cum quattuor hominum milia e Pannonibus eduxisset, e Carnis multas cohortes et sat validum equitatum coegit, imprimis in Cividatenses castra movit". BONFINI, vv. 236-38 (p. 68). Sacile cadde nelle mani dei veneziani il 14 agosto 1419 [cfr. Sanuto, *Vitae Ducum* cit., coll. 928-29]. Fu a questo punto che il patriarca, molto preoccupato dell'andamento della guerra, si recò in Ungheria a chiedere personalmente soccorsi al re Sigismondo [G.F. PALLADIO DEGLI OLIVI, *Historie della provincia del Friuli*, Udine 1660, vol. I, p. 488]. Il 19 novembre 1419 Ludovico di Teck fece ritorno in Friuli accompagnato da Marsilio da Carrara, dal conte di Gorizia, Enrico, e da 7000 soldati ungheresi; solo allora, passò ad assediare Cividale (25 novembre), che già l'11 luglio si era sottomessa alla Signoria con gran disappunto del patriarca medesimo; in soccorso di Cividale arrivarono le truppe venete di Taddeo d'Este, mentre gli ungheresi scorazzavano nella campagna. L'assedio di Cividale durò quindici giorni; fu tolto per il freddo e la neve [cfr. *ivi*, p. 491].

<sup>38</sup> "Oppidum imposito Venetorum presidio munitissimum obsidet, circumiacentem longe lateque agrum populatur et incendit, sed brume mox vesania obsidionem solvere coactus est solutoque exercitu, cum per oppida cuncta presidia disposuisset, ipse cum auxiliaribus copiis in Ungariam concessit". BONFINI, v. 239 (p. 68).

<sup>39</sup> "Eadem hieme Veneti oppida, que proximo bello amiserant, recepere imprimisque Feltrum et Bellunum recuperant, mox Carnorum fines ingressi, quos magna ex parte Foroiulianos appellant, Pratum imprimis adoriuntur evertuntque. Philippus Arcius vir bello impiger Venetorum tunc ductabat exercitum; in tanto belli successu haud cunctandum esse ratus Utinum obsedit, quod idcirco factum est, quia Utinenses plerique cives, qui Savorgnane factionis erant, portam, que ad Cividatum pertinet, se proxima nocte patefacturos esse pollicebantur. Patefacta ex composito porta ingresso oborto tumultu detectaque coniuratione oppidanorum occursum reiecti sunt. Exules, quos temeraria invexit audacia, partim cesi, partim repulsi". *Ivi*, vv. 240-42 (p. 68). Feltre fu sottomessa dai veneziani il 14 marzo 1420, Belluno il 24 aprile [cfr. SANUTO, *Vitae Ducum* cit., col. 932]. La scorreria delle truppe dell'Arcelli fino alle porte di Udine risale invece al 12 aprile 1419: qui – scrive il Sanuto – "vennero alle mani" col conte di Gorizia, che stava in agguato con 170 cavalieri; 65 friulani furono fatti

Impossibilitati a sostenere il peso della guerra, gli udinesi si risolsero infine a trattare coi veneziani la resa e la dedizione della loro città alla Repubblica. Venezia accettò la resa purché fosse stato permesso al Savorgnano di rientrare in città e recuperare tutti i suoi beni<sup>40</sup>.

Ma Ludovico di Teck, cacciato dalla 'Patria', non si arrese: nel giugno del 1422 scese in Friuli con 4000 ungheresi, impadronendosi dei castelli di Manzano e di Rosazzo, mentre le truppe magiare occupavano Chiusa e Moggio, nella valle del Fella (Bonfini non parla però in questa occasione della presa di Manzano e Rosazzo). Fu però respinto dall'intervento dei veneziani. Sigismondo non poté intervenire perché era allora impegnato contro gli ottomani e contro gli ussiti<sup>41</sup>. L'ex patriarca farà un ultimo tentativo di riconquistare la 'Patria del

prigionieri dai veneti, i cui "guastatori [...] non facevano altro tutto il giorno che dare il guasto alle vigne e alle biade" [ivi, col. 926]. Al 12 settembre 1419 risale invece il tentativo degli uomini del Savorgnano di entrare in Udine insieme con dei soldati veneziani attraverso la porta di San Gottardo [ivi, col. 927].

<sup>40</sup> "Utinenses annos aliquot bello vexati. Veneti pleraque interim oppida proceresque Carnorum in dicionem suam rede gere. Utinenses, cum Lodovicum Aquileiensem in Pannoniis agentem aliquamdiu expectassent, desperato subsidio ac Venete artis instinctu ad Venetos misere oratores, qui bonis deditionem condicionibus curarent. E sententia cum Venetis est composita deditio, id unum adiectum, ut inito federe Fredericum eiusdemque factionis homines in patriam restituerent omniaque bona redderent. Percussum ex compacto utrinque fedus". BONFINI, vv. 243-45 (p. 68). Diversi erano stati i tentativi degli udinesi di addivenire a un accordo coi veneziani. Già il 6 novembre 1418 sette ambasciatori della Patria si erano presentati a Venezia per trattare la pace con la Serenissima, ma non fu concluso alcun accordo [cfr. SANUTO, col. 924]. Il 21 febbraio 1419 si presentò a Venezia anche il legato papale Fernando Frias, detto il cardinale di Spagna, che era stato inviato dal papa Martino V su sollecitazione del patriarca stesso e dei friulani; lo accompagnavano infatti alcuni messi del patriarca, i quali evidenziavano in tal maniera la loro disposizione a troncare le relazioni col re dei Romani. Tuttavia, anche quest'ambasceria non ebbe esiti positivi [cfr. SANUTO, col. 925; LIRUTI, *Notizie delle cose del Friuli* cit., p. 172]. Alla fine di marzo dello stesso anno il Parlamento della Patria decise perciò l'invio a Venezia di altri ambasciatori con l'incarico precipuo di trattare la pace: Venezia era disposta a intavolare dei negoziati di pace solo previa consegna nelle proprie mani dell'importante centro di Sacile; ma il patriarca non intendeva alienare alcuno dei beni della Chiesa aquileiese; anzi, esigeva la restituzione da parte di Venezia dei castelli istriani che gli erano stati sottratti. Udine dal canto suo era disposta ad accettare la pace con Venezia, purché a Tristano e ai suoi non fosse consentito di rientrare in patria [Cfr. G. DE RENALDIS, *Memorie storiche dei tre ultimi secoli del patriarcato d'Aquileia (1411-1751)*, Udine 1888, pp. 61-62]. Non c'era quindi alcuna possibilità di dialogo, né tanto meno d'accordo tra il patriarca e la Signoria. Nel frattempo la guerra continuava con veemenza creando estremi disagi soprattutto alla popolazione locale. Dopo che gran parte del Friuli era caduto nelle mani dei veneziani e che anche i conti di Gorizia erano scesi a patti con la Signoria rompendo ogni vincolo con Sigismondo (24 maggio 1420), il 6 giugno 1420 pure la comunità di Udine accettò la sottomissione alla Serenissima: otto suoi "oratori" giurarono obbedienza al doge Tommaso Mocenigo a nome di tutta la loro comunità; la città friulana poté così conservare quasi tutti i suoi privilegi. Tristano fece rientro a Udine il 7 giugno, dopo un lungo esilio; il 24 giugno furono infine approvati i patti con Venezia [cfr. SANUTO, col. 933].

<sup>41</sup> "Audita Utinensium deditione eandem pleraque Carnorum oppida condicionem subivere. Lodovicus Aquileiensis Utinensium defectione irritatus e Pannoniis per Noricos confestim in Carnos cum validissimo equitatu Pannonum erupit. Primo Clusinam arcem impetu in montium angustiis editam vi cepit, Mutianum oppressit, nonnulla circum oppida expugnavit. Sed Veneti interventu intercepta victoria. Sigismundus enim, qui variis expeditionibus distinebatur et modo cum Turcis



Friuli' nel 1431 (30 ottobre) scendendo in Italia con 5000 ungheresi. La riconquista di Manzano e Rosazzo fu un effimero successo: sconfitto nuovamente, fece ritorno da Sigismondo, e, dopo la sua morte, tutto il Friuli cadrà definitivamente sotto la sovranità veneziana<sup>42</sup>.

Ebbe così fine il plurisecolare dominio temporale dei patriarchi d'Aquileia, e nella sua fine giocò un ruolo molto importante, se non addirittura decisivo, la loro alleanza coi re d'Ungheria e in particolare con Sigismondo di Lussemburgo, il protettore di quello che fu in effetti l'ultimo patriarca a capo di uno stato sovrano.

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modo cum Bohemis variisque gentibus bellum gerebat, Italici belli spiritus remittere cogeatur". BONFINI, vv. 246-49 (pp. 68-69). Ludovico di Teck si rifugiò presso i conti di Cilli [Celje], che lo avevano già ospitato dopo la sconfitta del 1420. Come ricompensa per l'ospitalità e la protezione ricevuta dai conti di Cilli, Ludovico di Teck concesse loro vari privilegi ecclesiastici e li infeudò di quei possedimenti che la Chiesa d'Aquileia teneva in Stiria, Carinzia e Carniola. Cfr. LIRUTI, *Notizie* cit., pp. 179-80.

<sup>42</sup> "Non multo post tempore Lodovicus Sigismundi opibus adiutus haud inferiore quam antea apparatu in Foroiulianum agrum revertitur. Mansanum primo, deinde Rosacium et pleraque castella capit. Instaurato in Carnis bello Veneti occurrere, exegere Lodovicum, qui pre commeatum inopia bellum ibi diu alere non poterat. Ad Sigismundum tandem reversus, dum in Noricis et Pannonibus nova molitur, vita decessit. Audito Aquileiensis presulis obitu Foroiulianus ager, cum variis Sigismundus bellis vexaretur, a Venetis occupatur". BONFINI, vv. 250-53 (p. 69). Gli invasori presero con forza l'abbazia di Rosazzo, rubandovi ogni bene, incendiandola e mutilando della mano destra tutti i malcapitati che si trovavano sul posto. Il 5 novembre seguente i veneziani recuperarono il bottino trafugato a Rosazzo e contraccambiarono le efferatezze dei magiari facendo una strage tra i nemici, troncando le mani e strappando gli occhi ai prigionieri. Al sopraggiungere del conte di Carnagnola, il patriarca lasciò definitivamente il Friuli il 16 novembre 1431. Questo fu anche l'ultimo tentativo di Sigismondo di Lussemburgo di riconquistare il Friuli. Nel 1435 l'ex patriarca cercò di far valere i suoi diritti temporali sul Patriarcato rivolgendosi al Concilio di Basilea, cui chiese e ottenne la restituzione dei propri domini. L'atto di restituzione dei suoi possedimenti temporali sancito dal Concilio fu però revocato dal papa veneziano Eugenio IV. Ludovico di Teck, ritiratosi a vita privata, si spense a Basilea il 24 agosto 1439 (secondo altre fonti era già morto nel 1434). Cfr. PASCHINI, *Storia del Friuli* cit., pp. 750-53; F. CUSIN, *Il confine orientale d'Italia nella politica europea del XIV e XV secolo*, Trieste 1977, p. 277.



***Improvisation and directive.***  
***Development of naval warfare tactics in the Anglo–Dutch Wars***  
***(1652–1674)***

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This essay aims to present the development and changes of naval warfare tactics during the Anglo–Dutch Wars in the seventeenth century (1652–1674). The main purpose of the study is source presentation and analysis. I would like to present the tactical changes in naval warfare using the contemporary *Fighting Instructions*, which was edited and annotated by Julian Corbett. My goal originally was a translation and presentation of the source in Hungarian and through the source to introduce this section of modern history to Hungarian research. In this paper I am trying to explore how the issued instructions were put in to practice on the battlefield and how they influenced the development of naval warfare. The study's objective is not an in-depth analysis of the Anglo–Dutch Wars. It is to describe the most important events. During my research I came to the conclusion that the Hungarian literature does not examine the *Fighting Instructions*. I think it is important to write such a summary. That is why I chose that approach. We can say that the new maritime warfare which was applied in the Anglo–Dutch Wars had epochal importance.

My presentation is based on English sources. The English and the Dutch researchers wrote several important monographs about the wars. For example: We have a number of primary sources about the wars and the naval warfare tactics. Corbett's work, *Fighting Instructions, 1530–1816* (1905) was one my primary sources. Corbett formulated what has become the most influential theory of naval grand strategy. Samuel Pepys was the greatest naval administrator of the period and his diary is very important. It was issued relatively early: H. B. Wheatley: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (10 vols., 1893–1899). An early work about the tactics was written by Paul Hoste: *L'art des armées navales* (1697). There are several contemporary accounts of the battles. Guiche, a French Count participated in numerous battles. He wrote his memories: *Memories d'Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche...* (1744). We can also mention Penn's work: Granville Penn: *Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn...: From 1644 to 1670* (Volume II. 1833).

An early analysis of the Wars' reasons can be found in George Edmundson's work, *Anglo–Dutch Rivalry during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century*.<sup>1</sup> Charles Wilson's work, *Profit and Power: England and the Dutch Wars* was more substantial.<sup>2</sup> Some historians say that the war broke out because of commercial reasons. Jonathan Israel's

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<sup>1</sup> George Edmundson: *Anglo–Dutch Rivalry during the First Half of the Seventeenth Century*. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Wilson: *Profit and Power. England and the Dutch Wars*. Longmans, Green, London 1957.

work, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall, 1477–1806* (1995) is a detailed history of the Dutch Republic. He presents the reasons and also the history of the Anglo–Dutch Wars. Maarten R. Prak's work, *Gouden Eeuw* (2004) is also a summary work (I used the Hungarian translation). Steven C. A. Pincus's work, *Protestantism and Patriotism* (1990) claims that ideology and religion played important roles in the conflict.

There are several old monographies. For example: John Leyland: *The Royal navy* (1914), Williams Hamilton: *Britain's naval power* (1894). Several studies present the opposing fleets. Jaap Bruijn's work, *The Dutch Navy of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (1993) claims that the Dutch developed the first "standing navy" in the world. Roger Hainsworth's work, *The Anglo–Dutch Naval Wars, 1652–1674* recounts the wars in a narrative history.<sup>3</sup>

A. T. Mahan work's, *The Influence of Sea Power on History, 1660–1783* (1890) is the best book for placing the naval events in the context of general history. Sir William Clowes's work, *The Royal Navy* (1897) is useful in describing the events, but lacks references to authorities. J. R. Jones's work, *The Anglo–Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century* (1996) is also important. Jack Sweetman's edited work, *The Great Admirals* (1997) is also a useful source (I used the Hungarian translation). Gijs Rommelse's work, *The Second Anglo–Dutch War (1665–1667)* (2006) presents the events of the second war. The most extensive book about the Four Days' Battle is Frank L. Fox's work, *A Distant Storm* (1996). P. G. Rogers' work, *The Dutch in the Medway* (1970) introduces the Dutch attack in the Medway.

The English Monarchy and the Dutch Republic fought three wars during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The first between 1652–1654, the second between 1665–1667 and the third between 1672–1674. There was one more war during the 18<sup>th</sup> century: 1780–1784. The Dutch fell and the English rose. The wars were primarily naval and commercial wars. The most important thing was that modern naval tactics developed. Instead of the 16<sup>th</sup> century's chaotic sea battles, the 17–18<sup>th</sup> century was characterized – similarly to the land battles – by well-organized and predetermined battles. The good organization and the order was due to the different permanent fighting instructions.<sup>4</sup>

The basis of English naval tactics during the 17–18<sup>th</sup> century was "*The Fighting Instructions*" first consolidated by James, Duke of York (later James II; ruled 1685–1688) in the 1660s. The constant instructions of battle were differently named over the years. In the Third War the Duke of York was commander at sea. In the spring of 1672 he distributed his fighting instructions. Later he released the first printed book containing both sailing and fighting instructions. These *Instructions for better ordering his majesty's fleet in fighting*<sup>5</sup> remained in general use until 1688. In 1689 the English government replaced this and published his own fighting instructions entitled *Sailing and Fighting Instructions*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Roger Hainsworth – Christine Churches: *The Anglo–Dutch naval wars 1652–1674*. Alan Sutton Publishing, Ltd. Stroud, Gloucestershire 1998.

<sup>4</sup> Julian S. Corbett: *Fighting Instructions, 1530–1816*. In: *Publications of the Navy Records Society* Vol. XXXIX. (Publisher location unknown) 1905. 67–135.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 125.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Sweetman (ed.): *Admirálisok: a történelem legkiválóbb tengernagyai 1587–1945*. [The great admirals: command at sea, 1587–1954]. Zrínyi Kiadó, Budapest 1999. 21–22.

In the 17–18<sup>th</sup> century there were two ‘schools’ which presented the evolution of fleet tactics. One school represented by the Duke of York and William Penn (1621–1670)<sup>7</sup> inclined to formality. This school was called the *formalists*. The other school represented by George Monck (1608–1670) and Prince Rupert (1619–1682) was inclined to take tactical risks. This school was called the *meleeists*. Both tactical opinions held the line of battle to be the proper formation for a fleet entering action. The *formalists* thought that the formation should be retained until the enemy fleet was in retreat. Contrary to this, the *meleeist* believed that the line could be discarded in order to force out a decision. During the battles the Admirals developed three tactical maneuvers. The first of these tactics was merging the vessels. Another possibility was a tactical encirclement. Finally, a breakthrough was formulated in the instructions which tactics can be found in James, Duke of York’s *Supplementary Instructions* in 1672. In the battle the attacking fleet penetrated the enemy lines, broke it and divided the enemy’s fleet.<sup>8</sup>

Both of these schools represented themselves in the Anglo–Dutch Wars. My goal is to describe the development of tactics on the basis of the ideas of these two schools. First I examine the instructions and then how they were applied in practice.

After the Peace of Westphalia (1648) new powers emerged in Europe. England, France and the Dutch Republic were the great powers. The Netherlands owned its great-power status thanks to its economy. The country was at the forefront of long-distance trade. Admiral Mahan aptly remarked that “...the Dutch merchantmen (...) caused the grass to grow in the streets of Amsterdam.”<sup>9</sup> The year 1650 marked a political turning point in the history of the Dutch Republic. The political leadership was in the hands of Johan De Witt (1625–1672) who began a more active naval policy at the sea. A commercial rivalry envolved between England and the Republic.

The cause of the first war was the combined effect of several factors. Several works emphasize that the main reason was the *Navigation Act* issued by the English Parliament in 1651.<sup>10</sup> It stipulated that goods could be imported into territories of the English Commonwealth only by English ships, or by ships of the country originally producing the goods being carried. Some historians, such as Pincus argue that the cause of the outbreak of

<sup>7</sup> Penn’s son was William Penn (1644–1718), founder of Pennsylvania.

<sup>8</sup> Sweetman: *Admirálisok*, 78–79.

<sup>9</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660–1783*. Little, Brown and company, Boston 1890. 77.

<sup>10</sup> Francis Ludwig Carsten (ed.): *The New Cambridge Modern History. Volume. V. The Ascendancy of France 1648–1688*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1961. 284.; H. Lawrence Swinburne: *The Royal Navy*. Adam and Charlie Black, London 1907. 61.; Maarten Roy Prak: *Hollandia aranykora: a Köztársaság talánya. [Gouden Eeuw. Het raadsel van de Republiek]* Osiris Kiadó, Budapest 2004. 48.; John Leyland: *The Royal navy: its influence in English history and in the growth of empire*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1914. 42.; Williams Hamilton: *Britain’s naval power: a short history of the growth of the British navy from the earliest times to Trafalgar*. MacMillan and Co., London 1894. 64.

the war was ideological.<sup>11</sup> Another cause was the English demand that all ships lower their flag in the Channel.<sup>12</sup>

In May, 1652 Maarten van Tromp (1598–1653), one of the most prominent sailors of the age refused to salute the English vessels. The English opened fire. Tromp lost two ships but escorted his convoy to the port.<sup>13</sup> Two months later, on July 10, 1652 the English Parliament formally declared war on the Dutch Republic.<sup>14</sup> The outcome of the battles was quite different during the war. The opposing forces were of the same strength. During the first month the English ships attacked the dutch merchant ships. Robert Blake (1599–1657), who was the “*general at sea*” of the English navy prevented the Dutch fishing in the North Sea and the dutch trade in the Baltic. Sir George Ayscue (1616–1672) was responsible for the protection the Channel.<sup>15</sup>

The first battle occurred off Plymouth on August 26, 1652. Michiel Adriaenszoon De Ruyter (1607–1676) who was a Dutch national hero and an admiral with exceptional ability defeated Ayscue’s weaker fleet. The next battle took place near the mouth of the River Thames at Kentish Knock on October 8, 1652. The English Admirals – Blake, Penn and Bourne – sank and captured twenty Dutch ships.<sup>16</sup> The Dutch reinforced their fleet. This led to the Battle of Dungeness (December 10, 1652) and the Battle of Leghorn (March 14, 1653.) The Dutch won all these battles.<sup>17</sup> During the winter of 1652–53, the English repaired their ships and strenghtend their position. Between on February 28 – March 2, 1653 in the Battle of Portland the English Admirals – Blake, Deane and Monck – drove the Dutch – Tromp, De Ruyter – out of the Channel.<sup>18</sup>

Before the Battle of Portland the war was characterized by unorganization. Then the Commonwealth’s *generals at sea*, Robert Blake, Richard Dean and George Monck issued their instructions “*for the better ordering of the fleet in Fighting*” on March 29, 1653.<sup>19</sup> These Fighting Instructions aimed at a single line ahead as a battle formation. The third article of the Commonwealth Orders ordered:

“...Then every ship of the said squadron shall endeavour to keep in the line with the admiral, or he that commands in chief next unto him, and nearest the enemy.”

<sup>11</sup> Steven C. A. Pincus: *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1668*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Hamilton: *Britain’s naval power*, 62–64.

<sup>13</sup> James Baikie: *Pepys at the royal navy*. Adam and Charlie Black, London 1913. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Prak: *Hollandia aranykora*, 48.

<sup>15</sup> Leyland: *The Royal navy*, 43–44.

<sup>16</sup> Hamilton: *Britain’s naval power*, 64.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.british-civil-wars.co.uk/military/first-anglo-dutch-war-battles.htm>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>19</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 82–88. *Commonwealth Orders*, 1653. Blake, Monck, Disbrowe and Penn re-issued the Commonwealth Orders with some amendments and verbal alterations in March 1654. (Granville Penn: *Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn...: From 1644 to 1670*. Volume II. James Duncan, Paternoster Row, London 1833. 76–80.)

The Orders were comprised of fourteen articles. Eight established commands based on tactical circumstances (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13). These instructions regulated the combat situations. Before the battle started each unit had to send a ship to detect the enemy fleet (Article 1). Article 2 provided that the rear-admiral and the vice-admiral had to come to the admiral on each wing when the fleet discovered the enemy. The vice-admiral was on the right wing and the rear-admiral was on the left wing. Also the paragraphs try to provided what to do if a ship from the fleet was disabled, sinking or burning (Article 4 and 5). The articles regulated what to do if the enemy ship was in the English hands (Article 10). Article 12 detailed how to prevent and repel the enemy fleet's fireship attack. Article 13 regulated the attack of the fireship of the fleet.

Four articles were standing orders. Article 11 was such an article:

"None shall fire upon any ship of the enemy that is laid aboard by any of our own ships, but so that he may be sure he endamage not his friend."

Two prescribed signals to be made by ships retiring to repair damage or in distress (Article 6 and 14). Article 14 formulated what signal should be applied when the fleet was in retreat. We can observe that the signal was not a flag signal:

"...the signal to be firing two guns, the one so nigh the other as the report may be distinguished, and within three minutes after to do the like with two guns more."

Article 6 also regulated what to do in the event when the admiral's ship or any other flagship had to leave the battlefield:

"...the respective squadron are to endeavour **to keep up in a line** as close as they can betwixt him [admiral] and the enemy, having always one eye to defend him in case thew enemy should come to annoy him in that condition."

Article 7 directed that where the windward station was gained the line ahead had to be formed "*upon severest punishment*". The sign for this maneuver was a blue flag at the mizen yard or the mizen topmast. Article 8 ordered which signals the ships should be used in battle. Article 9 provided similar signals for flagships.

*The Generals at Sea* were veteran military men. They all served in the English Civil War. Blake was the only one of the three generals who had had experience of naval actions. They were accustomed to the much greater control a general could at least aspire to exercise in engagements ashore. The new instructions were calculated to bring out the best methods which they had empirically practised. His goal was the maintenance of a closed system, constant practicing, precise and careful use of weapons, and most importantly compliance with the instructions of the commander.

In the next battle at Gabbard Bank on June 12–13, 1653, thanks to the instructions, the commanders used the line formation. The English won an overwhelming victory over the

Dutch. "Our fleet," said a report by an eye-witness, "did work together in better order than before and seconded on another."<sup>20</sup>

The final battle of the war was the Battle of Scheveningen (also known as the Battle of Texel or the Battle of Ter Heijde) on August 8–10, 1653. Tromp, De Ruyter and Witte de With entered into battle with the English fleet led by Monck. The battle was watched by hundreds of spectators on the beaches as the two fleets met in a fierce fight of the line. "This is the first action," wrote Paul Hoste, who was the author of the first treatise on Naval Tactics<sup>21</sup>, "that the Dutch fleet forming in single line (...) and they adopted it in English formation."<sup>22</sup> In the early stages of the battle, Tromp was killed by a musket shot as his flagship the *Brederode* led the Dutch attack. The loss was irreplaceable. A contemporary writer aptly remarked, that "If they should cast twenty John Evertsen and twenty De Ruyters into-one, they couldn't make one Tromp."<sup>23</sup> The new Dutch commanders De With, De Ruyter and Jan Evertsen retreated from the battle. The Battle of Scheveningen was the last fleet engagement before the war ended with the signing of the Peace of Westminster on May 8, 1654.

The material and financial sources of England and the Dutch Republic were exhausted. England won the war and the Netherlands was forced to recognize the *Navigation Act*. Thereafter all Dutch vessels were obliged to pay tribute to the English ships in the Channel.<sup>24</sup> The most serious differences however were not resolved. The two countries' commercial rivalry and the struggle between the two navies continued.

The Dutch Republic quickly recovered from the first Anglo-Dutch War. It was still a great power. When the monarchy was restored in England in 1660, Charles II (ruled 1660–1685) used his full power to put an end to the Dutch commercial superiority. The fight broke out in the colonies, and then it spread to Europe. James, the Duke of York instructed Robert Holmes (1622–1692) who was at service of the Royal African Company to occupy the Dutch colonies and trading posts in West Africa. Parallely with the events in Africa, the English occupied the Dutch possessions in North America.<sup>25</sup> The English fleet –

<sup>20</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 79.

<sup>21</sup> Paul Hoste (1652–1700) was a French priest and mathematician. He was present at a number of naval engagements including the Battle of La Hougue in 1692. Hoste learned many of his tactical ideas from Tourville and it was Tourville's suggestion that he wrote his masterpiece: *L'art des armées navales* (*L'art des armées navales : où traité des évolutions navales, qui contient des Règles utiles aux officiers généraux, et Particuliers d'une armée navale ; avec des exemples tirez de ce qui s'est passé de plus considérable sur la mer depuis cinquante ans...* Anisson & Posuel, Lyon 1697). Hoste was the author of several other works (*Receuil des traités mathématiques*, 1692). He received a pension from Louis XIV, to whom *L'art des armées navales* was dedicated.

<sup>22</sup> Hoste: *L'art des armées navales*, 78. "Les Anglois avoient essayé de gagner le vent. Mais l'Admiral Tromp en aiant toujours conservé l'avantage, & s'étant rangé sur une ligne parallèle à celle des Anglois, arriva sur eux, & commença le combat..." Hoste's source was a French eye-witness, who stayed on a Corvette on the day of the battle.

<sup>23</sup> Leyland: *The Royal navy*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Charles D. Young: *The British Navy, the earliest period to the present*. R. Bentley, London 1866. 76.

<sup>25</sup> George Clark: *The Later Stuarts: 1660–1714*. 2. ed. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1955. 63.



commanded by Colonel Richard Nicolls (1624–1672) – occupied New Amsterdam which Holmes named to New York, in honor of the Duke of York at a later stage of the war.<sup>26</sup>

During the Restoration James, the Duke of York was the commander in chief of the English fleet. He issued his first tactical instructions to the fleet on April 10, 1665.<sup>27</sup> The commands essentially did not include many new instructions compared to the ones in 1653. After rising to the throne Charles did not want a collection of commands to remain in practice, issued by the Republic, which executed his father.

There were only two new important provisions among the sixteen articles. Article 2 told captains to “*put themselves into the place and order which shall have been directed them in the order of battle*”. Article 3 formulated, that the ships “*they can to engage with the enemy according to the order prescribed*”. Thanks to these instructions each ship had now been assigned a definite position in the line.

Later, on April 18 James added ten *Additional Instructions* to his previous provisions.<sup>28</sup> Article 6 reflects the tactical thinking of James. He thought that the formation should be retained until the enemy fleet was in retreat. This instruction made it impossible for any unit of the fleet to exploit a tactical situation or a moment of opportunity.

The directive specified what distance had to be observed in the line for the ships. The distance was half a cable’s length (100 yard).<sup>29</sup> The Royal Navy (as Charles II entitled it following the Restoration) would observe that distance for almost two hundred years.<sup>30</sup>

“...the commanders of his majesty’s fleet shall endeavour to keep about the distance of half a cable’s length one from the other...”(Article 4)

Article 7 formulated what to do when chasing the enemy:

“In case of chase none of his majesty’s fleet or ships shall chase beyond sight of the flag, and at night all chasing ships are to return to the flag.”

Only nine days later James issued three additional instructions.<sup>31</sup> These instructions were the confirmation of his previous instructions. James clearly intended to concentrate tactical control of the fleet in his hand.

The first battle, which almost put an end to the war took place at Lowestoft on June 13, 1665.<sup>32</sup> James broke through the Dutch line and won the battle. It was the most serious

<sup>26</sup> See. Henry L. Schoolcraft: The Capture of New Amsterdam. *English Historical Review*, Vol. XXII. 1907. 674–693.

<sup>27</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 100–104. The Duke of York, April 10, 1665.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 104–106. The Duke of York, April 10 or 18, 1665.

<sup>29</sup> This distance was a full cable in the French fleet. Hoste: *L’art des armées navales*, 65. “*Les Vaisseaux doivent Être à un cable les une des autres, ou à cent toises.*”

<sup>30</sup> Sweetman: *Admiralisk*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 106–107. The Duke of York’s Supplementary Order, April 27, 1665.

<sup>32</sup> William Laird Clowes: *The Royal Navy: A History from the Earliest Times to the Present*. Volume. II. S. Low, Marston, London 1897. 259–264.; Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power*, 67–71.

defeat of the Dutch Republic's navy.<sup>33</sup> Sir William Penn believed that the battle was fought according to the *Fighting Instruction* which provided the division of the enemy fleet.<sup>34</sup> However, James did not write anywhere that this maneuver was intentional. The victory was due to an accident: Opdam's ship, which was the flagship of the Dutch fleet, exploded.

James was relieved from his post in the leadership of the fleet because he did not press the chase of the defeated Dutch fleet. James acted according to his *Fighting Instruction*. He retained the formation: "*None of the ships of his majesty's fleet shall pursue any small number of ships of the enemy before the main of the enemy's fleet shall be disabled or shall run.*"<sup>35</sup>

After James left, Prince Rupert and Monck were appointed the heads of the English fleet. De Ruyter who returned to the West Indies led the Dutch fleet. The two opposing fleets clashed again on June 11–14, 1666. The Four Days' Battle was one of the longest and bloodiest naval engagements of the age.<sup>36</sup>

Before the battle started the English fleet was split into two parts because the intelligence had reported that the English should also be take up the fight with the French fleet.<sup>37</sup> In January, 1666 the French monarchy entered the war on the Dutch side. The fleet allocation during the battle was a strategic mistake. This mistake was a decisive reason for the defeat of the English fleet.

The battle and the assessment of the battle were very important lessons for the development of tactics. First of all we must mention a contemporary criticism about the English command. Samuel Pepys considered to his diary that Admiral Sir William Penn had told him it proved "...we must fight in line, whereas we fight promiscuously, to our utter demonstrable ruin: the Dutch fighting otherwise, and we whenever we beat them."<sup>38</sup> His assertion should not be accepted without source criticism. He was not present at the battle. He knew that the causes of defeat were strategic, not only tactical reasons. Penn was the opponent strategic school's representative. And it is hard to believe that the English fleet took up the fight without line formation in the middle of the Second Dutch War. Finally, Penn was "...the falsest rascal that ever was in the world", according to Sir George Carter, who was the treasurer of the fleet.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Sweetman: *Admirálistok*, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Penn: *Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn*, 322–333., 344–350. The order which provided breaking the enemy's fleet was not included among the directives in the Second Anglo–Dutch War. James issued such instruction in 1672, presumably based on the lessons of the previous war. (Corbett: *Fighting instructions*, 121–122. The Duke of York's Supplementary Orders, 1672. Article 2.)

<sup>35</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 104. The Duke of York, April 10 or 18, 1665. Article 6.

<sup>36</sup> See. J. R. Jones: *The Anglo–Dutch Wars of the Seventeenth Century*. Longman, London, New York. 1996. 169–171.; Frank L. Fox: *A Distant Storm: The Four Days' Battle of 1666: The Greatest Sea Fight of the Age of Sail*. Press of Sail Publications, Rotherfield 1996. 167–314.; Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power*, 71–76.; Clowes: *The Royal Navy*, 264–279.

<sup>37</sup> Clark: *Later Stuarts*, 65.

<sup>38</sup> Samuel Pepys: *The Diary of Samuel Pepys. From 1659 to 1669*. Ed. Lord Braybrooke. Frederick Warne and Co., London, New York 1879. 219. (July 4, 1666.)

<sup>39</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 98.

De Guiche, the French Count, who joined the Dutch fleet praised the English fleet. He remembered the English ships with admiration and using a military analogy, he drew parallels with the cavalry:

"Nothing equals the beautiful order of the English at sea. (...) They fight like a line of cavalry which is handled according to rule, and applies itself solely to force back those who oppose; whereas the Dutch advance like cavalry whose squadrons leave their ranks and come separately to the charge."<sup>40</sup>

The English tactics reflected the ideas of the *meleeist* tactic. We can see it in Prince Rupert's instruction:

"...and to endeavour the utmost that may be the destruction of the enemy, which is always to be made the chiefest care."<sup>41</sup>

The English fleet broke through the line of the Dutch fleet in the battle. On the fourth day – probably due to Rupert's Instruction – Myngs broke through the Dutch line and then carried out the attack with his ships on the other side.

After the lost battle the English military moral did not break up. De Witt perfectly realized: "If the English were beaten, their defeat did them more honour than all their former victories; all the Dutch had discovered was that Englishmen might be killed and English ships burned, but English courage was invincible."<sup>42</sup>

In the next battle, the St. James's Day fight the English won (on August 4–5, 1666).<sup>43</sup> Tromp opened the Dutch line.<sup>44</sup> He left the line with his ships and he began a separate battle with the English van. This was the reason for the defeat of the Dutch fleet.<sup>45</sup> The battle demonstrated – with Dutch example – the correctness of the tactics of the *formalists*. If the commanders do not keep the closed line then the fleet will be defeated.

On June 20–23, 1667 the Dutch successfully attacked the English naval base at the mouth of the River Medway.<sup>46</sup> They broke the boom which guarded Chatham harbour,

<sup>40</sup> "...que rien n'égale le bel Orde & la Discipline des Anglois. (...) Il faut imaginer une ligne de Cavallerie, qui se gouverne avec Règle; & qui s'applique seulement à faire céder celle qui lui est opposée, (...) vers les ennemis [the Dutch]; contre une autre, dont les Escadrons sortiront de leur Rang, & avanceront inégalement à la Charge." Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power*, 74. Quoted by *Mémoires d'Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche, Concernant les Provinces Unies des Pays-Bas servant de supplément et de confirmation à ceux d'Aubrey du Maurier et du Comte d'Estrades*. Philippe Changuion, Londres 1744. 251., 267.

<sup>41</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 107–108. Prince Rupert, 1666. Article 1.

<sup>42</sup> Swinburne: *The Royal Navy*, 91–92.

<sup>43</sup> See. Gijs Rommelse: *The Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667): Raison d'État, Mercantilism and Maritime Strife*. Uitgeverij Verloren, Hilversum 2006. 161.; Mahan: *The Influence of Sea Power*, 76.; Sweetman: *Admiralisk*, 52.; Clowes: *The Royal Navy*, 278–282.

<sup>44</sup> Cornelis Tromp (1629–1691), the son of Maartren Tromp.

<sup>45</sup> Rommelse: *The Second Anglo-Dutch War*, 161–162.

<sup>46</sup> See. P. G. Rogers: *The Dutch in the Medway*. Oxford University Press, London, New York 1970.; David Douglas (ed.): *English Historical Documents*. Volume. VI. 1660–1714. Routledge, London 1996. 835–836.; Rommelse: *The Second Anglo-Dutch War*, 180–182.

burnt four ships of the line, towed away the *Royal Charles*, the largest vessel of the fleet.<sup>47</sup> This was a great moral victory. In London panic broke out among the inhabitants and the political leadership. They were afraid of a Dutch invasion. The diary of Samuel Pepys gives a telling account of the events.<sup>48</sup> The demand for peace intensified in England.<sup>49</sup>

The *Treaty of Peace, Alliance, Navigation and Commerce* was concluded by Sir Henry Coventry and Denzil Hollis from England and Hieronymus Bevernik from Holland, Pieter De Huybert from Zeeland and Allard Jongestall from Friesland at the Dutch city of Breda on July 31, 1667.<sup>50</sup> Surinam (northern South America) and Polaroon or Pulo-Run (the island of Run in Indonesia) remained in Dutch hands. New Amsterdam (New York), New Jersey and Delaware were kept by England. The Navigation Laws (1651, 1660) were modified and the Dutch were now allowed to ship German goods to England.<sup>51</sup>

In the Third Anglo-Dutch War we can see the change in the alliance system, which was characteristic of the modern age. The French monarchy aimed to have a continental hegemony in Europe. The English and the French monarchy concluded the Dover Convention on June 1, 1670. The Convention aimed at breaking the trade hegemony of the Dutch Republic. According to the plan they wanted to destroy the Republic's military strength at sea and on land and then they wanted to appoint a new political leadership.<sup>52</sup> Louis XIV (ruled 1643–1715) wanted a quick war in alliance with England, Cologne and Münster. However, the conflict very quickly reached a continental size. In the first phase of the war the English fleet attacked the Dutch ships. The English historians called this conflict the Third Anglo-Dutch War.<sup>53</sup>

At the beginning of the war James was re-appointed as Fleet Commander. He was the commander of the fleet a short period. In 1672 the Test Act formulated the exclusion of non-anglicans from the various offices.<sup>54</sup> James was Catholic so he was forced to leave his

<sup>47</sup> Visitors can see the Royal Charles's counter in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The Royal Charles's counter is the part of the ship which rises up above the stern, and was often decorated with elaborate carving. [http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/aria/aria\\_assets/NG-MC-239?page=0&lang=en&context\\_space=&context\\_id=](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl/aria/aria_assets/NG-MC-239?page=0&lang=en&context_space=&context_id=)

<sup>48</sup> Henry B. Wheatley (ed.): *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*. Volume II. Random House, New York 1951. 600. For example he wrote this on July 17, 1667: "*The Dutch fleete are in great squadrons everywhere still about Harwich, and were lately at Portsmouth; and the last letters say at Plymouth, and now gone to Dartmouth to destroy our Streights' fleete lately got in thither; but God knows whether they can do it any hurt, or no, but it was pretty news come the other day so fast, of the Dutch fleets being in so many places, that Sir W. Batten at table cried, "By God," says he, "I think the Devil shifts Dutchmen."*

<sup>49</sup> Clark: *Later Stuarts*, 67–68.

<sup>50</sup> Rommelse: *The Second Anglo-Dutch War*, 184–188.

<sup>51</sup> George Chalmers: *A Collection of Treaties Between Great Britain and Other Powers*. Vol. I. Printed for J. Stockdale, Piccadilly, London 1790. 132–159.; See. Jonathan Israel: *The Dutch Republic: It's Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477–1806*. Clarendon Press, Oxford 1995. 774. Quoted by P. J. van Winter: *De Acte van Navigatie en de Verde van Breda*. In: *Bijdragen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 4. 1949. 27–65.

<sup>52</sup> Prak: *Hollandia aranykora*, 52.

<sup>53</sup> Hahner Péter: *A régi rend alkonya. Egyetemes történet 1648–1815*. Panem, Budapest 2006. 100.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 164.

office. His naval career came to an end in 1672. Sometime in spring between summer of 1672 he issued his instructions taking into account the experience of the previous war. The documents contained twenty-six articles which repeated and renewed the previous war's instructions.<sup>55</sup>

After his first instructions James issued three supplementary orders.<sup>56</sup> Article 1 reflected the English tactical idea. The paragraph ordered to keep the enemy fleet to leeward position. The English fleet in the 17–19<sup>th</sup> century still endeavored to ensure that vessels to be placed in windward position. The fleet that was in windward position, had advantages over the enemy fleet.<sup>57</sup>

The interpretation of Article 2 is problem because the order is not characteristic of the tactical thinking of James. This article first laid down in writing to break through and divide the enemy's fleet:

“...if the van of our fleet find that they have the wake of any part of them, they are to tack and to stand in, and strive to divide the enemy's body...”

This tactical maneuver was far from the *formalists'* tactical idea. This was rather characterized the *meleeists'* represented by Monck and Prince Rupert. This was an earlier instruction probably in the second war which first appeared in written form in 1672. James enshrined in this instruction, taking into account the experience of the previous war.

Finally, Article 3 provided again that the commanders had to keep the line at all costs. At this point we see again the tactical thinking of James which reflected *formalism*:

“The several commanders of the fleet are to take special care that they keep their line, and upon pain of death that they fire not over any of our own ships.”

The first battle between the Allied and the Dutch fleet – commanded by De Ruyter – was on June 7, 1672. The Dutch took up the fight on the Suffolk coast, in the Solebay.<sup>58</sup> The Anglo–French fleet was defeated and the Netherlands temporarily averted the risk of a seaward attack. But in the meantime the French troops penetrated deep into the Netherlands. Amsterdam was under a direct threat. In this situation Zeeland recognized William III (stadtholder 1672–1702; king of England 1689–1702) as stadtholder. The Dutch troops, thanks to William's fast response managed to force Louis's regiments back down.

In 1673 the events were concentrated at sea again. The Dutch encountered the Allies three times: twice in Scoonnenveld and once in Texel. The Dutch Admirals won all the three battles and repulsed the invasion intention of the Allied fleet.<sup>59</sup> Texel was the last

<sup>55</sup> Corbett: *Fighting Instructions*, 118–120. The Duke of York, 1672.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 121–123. The Duke of York's Supplementary Orders, 1672.

<sup>57</sup> John Keegan: *A tengeri hadviselés története [The Price of Admiralty. War at Sea from Man-of-War to Submarine]*. Corvina Kiadó, Budapest 1998. 50.

<sup>58</sup> Israel: *The Dutch Republic*, 797. Quoted by C. R. Boxer: *The Anglo–Dutch Wars of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*. National Maritime Museum Booklet, London 1974. 47–48.

<sup>59</sup> Prak: *Hollandia aranykora*, 55.

battle of the Third Anglo–Dutch war. England finished the war against the Republic and concluded the Second Peace of Westminster on February 19, 1714.<sup>60</sup> Thanks to the peace the Netherlands won new allies against the French. The length of the war revealed the weaknesses of the French monarchy and a stalemate developed. On August 10, 1678 the French and the Dutch concluded the Peace of Nijmegen which meant the end of the war.

England and the Netherlands were exhausted by the wars which mutually weakened the two countries. The English won only the first war by an overwhelming superiority. In the Peace of Breda which ended the second war, the English had to make concessions in favor of their opponent. However, they acquired the North American colonies. The third war was a complete and shameful failure for the English. The French monarchy only used England in order to achieve its great-power aspirations.

The Anglo–Dutch Wars were important not only in terms of the development of the relationship between the two countries. Thanks to Blake's instructions the line was adopted as the basic order of battle by every European sailing fleet. The typical Medieval impact tactics was replaced by the ship-ship, line-line tactics.

The new tactics brought success for the English in the first conflict. The second and the third wars were characterized by the opposition of the two schools. In the development of naval warfare tactics Horatio Nelson's thinking brought a new impetus who undertook the risky sea maneuvers – as Monck and Rupert – in order to destroy the entire fleet of the enemy.

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<sup>60</sup> Chalmers: *A Collection of Treaties*, 172–174.

## ***Distance in Vicinity: Beirut's Zuqaq el-Blat, a Place of Transformation, Conflict and Co-existence***

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In each city there is another, an underground city, underneath of which there is an endless number of hidden cities that time reveals in the most unexpected ways. These underground cities are at once both the past and future; they are all that no longer exists or does not yet exist in the present.<sup>1</sup>

Since religions are one of the most important culture-constructing factors they – especially the monotheistic ones – are often blamed for being sources and giving impetus to conflicts and hatred. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, Beirut was a meeting point and a place of coexistence for the brightest intellectuals of the contemporary Arab world. It was a multiconfessional and thus multicultural city where the different groups managed to conduct the unrestrained development of their cultural and religious lives. The intellectuals of various confessions who created this unique and exemplary ambience used their respective religions as tools for building a common universe in which education and dialogue gave birth to fruitful cooperation and respect.

In the Lebanese case – a country that has been divided between different religious denominations – historical research has so far not clarified the causes of the confessional system. Some historians explain its genesis as a genuine Lebanese tradition of power brokerage between clan-leaders, whereas others refer to the Ottoman millet system as the decisive factor of the confessional structure. Other historians take the influence of European conceptions and enforcement of foreign interests as being responsible for the development of such a system. Therefore, looking back may provide an idea to a later scholar of what could have been a potential, inherent, innate way of development for a given community.

One has to take into account that Lebanon, historically as well as geopolitically, is a buffer state. Consequently, it acquired hybrid characteristics and developed the complex Lebanese paradox, the phenomenon we deal with today. As the Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi pointed out “the Lebanese society enjoyed the reputation for liberalism and tolerance, being traditional rather than zealous or fanatical in its attitude towards religion and political

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<sup>1</sup> Review of *Yesterday's Man* by Tony Chakar, Rabih Mroué, Tiago Rodrigues. “A Portuguese man visits the town of Beirut year after year. (...) The city changes (...) at the mercy of time's erosion and history's convulsions. This man never changes, but lives different days at each visit – the days that the ever-changing city allows him to live.” <http://funzine.hu/200909283690/Culture/yesterdays-man.html>

ideology".<sup>2</sup> Samir Khalaf supports this image stating that "Beirut with increasing urbanisation absorbed and assimilated successive waves of migrants and political refugees without any apparent degree of mass violence or urban strife".<sup>3</sup>

Still, the confessionalist system in operation since 1926 has led to polarization, rather than the moderation of sectarian divides for it transforms differences which are not religious in and of themselves into religious conflicts. It is well illustrated by the manner in which the persistent social and intellectual struggles over the space of habitation in Beirut take religious and sectarian character.

Throughout history, the coastal cities of Lebanon shaped their populations. Being, essentially, merchant cities, they function as places where, in spite of the country's artificial and imposed borders, people have a chance to create and share a culture. By culture I mean a plural "system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating" where the individuals are challenged to recognize each other as belonging to the same nation.<sup>4</sup> The word "nation" is used here with strong reserve since Lebanon as a nation is still under construction. I consider "nation" as a cultural concept that has already been launched in Lebanon. Naturally, there are different interpretations of the meaning of nationhood in Lebanon, but a shared sense of belonging to a specific territory that has its clear political identity is common between many communities in Lebanon. I argue that the nineteenth-century Beirut was a microcosm where such Gellnerian "convictions and loyalties and solidarities" were born that invested the Beirut intelligentsia with the potential to create a very different Middle East of what exists today. It provided fertile ground for the evolution of Ottomanism, Muslim Reformism, Syrianism and Arabism, and later, in the first quarter of the twentieth century, Lebanonism. However, even if these currents shared various degrees of inclusiveness and supra-denominational openness, due to the special historical and geo-political background of the creation of "Greater Lebanon", after World War I the place of intercommunal cooperation so characteristic of the end of the nineteenth century, was gradually taken over by collision and open conflict.

The most creative phase of the unique Beirut intellectual endeavour started in 1863, only three years after the massacre of Christians in Mount Lebanon, when Boutros al-Boustani's National School opened its gates to pupils of all sects and beliefs to study under the guidance of the most eminent Muslim and Christian educators and scholars of the time. Boustani's initiative meant the triumph of loyalty to the land, Mount Lebanon and Beirut in particular, and to its Arabic heritage in general, and a firm belief in a promising common future for all its inhabitants.

It must be noted, that the duality and balance of European and Ottoman influence ensured the stability that made possible the realization of such initiatives. The struggle for influence between the Ottomans, the British, and the French over cultural and economic control helped to create a long lasting liberal environment in which schools, newspapers

<sup>2</sup> Salibi, Kamal: *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1993. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Khalaf, Samir – Kongstad, Per: *Hamra of Beirut: a case of rapid urbanization*. Brill, Leiden, 1973. 2–3.

<sup>4</sup> Gellner, Ernest: *Nations and Nationalism*. Blackwell, Oxford, 1983. 7.



and societies proliferated.<sup>5</sup> As Leila Fawaz has shown, at mid-century, this city was a place where foreigners dominated the economic and political sphere. However, the civil war of 1860 also generated a deep crisis for the imperial government in Istanbul and urged it to accelerate provincial and municipal reforms.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the nineteenth-century Beirut was at once the product, the object, and the project of overlapping European, Ottoman, and municipal civilising missions competed in the fields of administration, infrastructure, urban planning, public health, education, customs, journalism, and architecture.

With the direct control of France after 1921, and its determination to guarantee the political dominance of its Christian allies, the atmosphere changed, and the imposed westernization together with the Maronite supremacy gave way to upheavals and unrest thus making the newborn state more and more vulnerable to the enforcement of foreign interests in the decades that followed.

The aim of this essay is to give a broad outline of Beirut's transformations in the nineteenth and twentieth century, with special attention to one of its quarters called Zuqaq el-Blat (Zuqāq al-Balāt), the birthplace of those intellectual efforts that could at the same time absorb and preserve confessional identities and amalgamate them into an exemplary and specific universe, capable of providing forum for dialogue and mutual efforts for self-definition.

The first part of this study is dedicated to a general historical background of the nineteenth-century Beirut, which is followed by the description of the cultural ambience in its most famous and important 'intellectual workshop', Zuqaq el-Blat. The third part of the essay provides an outlook to the city's later history and the impact of the imposed Confessionalist structure with hints to the symbolic degradation of its cultural heritage and its conscious abandonment by the potent actors of the contemporary political life. This paper is aimed to challenge the repeatedly reinforced notion of Lebanon as a place – with Jens Hanssen words – “where things copied from the west are considered material proof of progress and a conscious stepping-out of centuries of unproductive identity accumulation”.<sup>7</sup>

## I. Beirut in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### 1. Historical background

The two main religious groups of Mount Lebanon, the Christian Maronite and the Muslim Druze communities developed peaceful relations with each other. The balance power was shaken when in 1788 the Maronite Bashir Shihab II (1767–1850) was elected emir and appointed wali of Mount Lebanon, and the Druze leaders were extruded from political power. The first bigger clashes between the two communities that contained

<sup>5</sup> Fawaz, Leila: “Foreign Presence and Perception of Ottoman Rule in Beirut.” In: Jens Hanssen – Thomas Philip – Stefan Weber (ed.): *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capital's in the Late Ottoman Empire*. Orient-Institut, Beirut, 2002. 93–104.

<sup>6</sup> Review by Jens Hanssen of Samir Kassir's *Histoire de Beyrouth* available: <http://www.atrissi.com/kassir/books2.html>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

sectarian character as well, took place in the 1820s. Bashir II supported Muhammad 'Ali (1769–1849), the pasha of Egypt who took Acre from the Ottomans in 1822, consequently the Druze forces were aligned with the Ottoman wali of Damascus. Bashir II disarmed the Druze and allied with France, governing in the name of Muhammad 'Ali, who entered Lebanon and formally took power in 1832. In the following years the conflict was deepened by the increasing economic isolation of the Druze, and the growing wealth of the Maronites.

Shortly after Bashir II had been forced to leave and the Ottoman Empire reasserted control, in 1841 clashes broke out between the Druze and the Maronites and for twenty years unrest and tension prevailed in the mountains. In 1842 the French, British, Russian, Austrian, and Prussian ambassadors to Istanbul met with the Ottoman foreign minister, but agreed only on the irreconcilability of the Druze and Maronite positions. Consequently, they decided to divide the Mountain into two *qa'im-maqamiyyas* (governorates), one in the north under a Maronite governor and the other in the south under a Druze district governor. Therefore, as Ussama Makdisi commented, in 1842 Europeans together with the Ottomans reinvented Mount Lebanon in sectarian terms, dividing it administratively along religious lines.<sup>8</sup>

In the south, however, placed under a Druze administrator lived a large number of Maronites, whose lord-peasant relationship gradually broke down and was replaced by a more egalitarian structure. This led to tensions among the Maronites still living in the north, and the peasants began to express their resentment toward the “feudal” privileges of their notables. The rebellions started in 1858 in the north encouraged the Druze to regain their lost supremacy over the whole territory. Their military offensive in April 1860 turned into a general massacre of Christians in Mount Lebanon that spread into Damascus.<sup>9</sup> After such antecedents the civil war of 1860 can be seen as partly an outcome of the administrative redefinition of communal and social boundaries and a response to the declining feudal system.<sup>10</sup> After 1860–61 a special administrative regime, the *mutassarriyya*, was established, giving the Mountain more autonomy from rest of the Ottoman Empire.

## 2. Beirut the Imperial City

Until the 1830s, Beirut had only been a harbour city of secondary importance behind Tripoli, Sidon, and Acre. It was a small medieval town with six gates, souqs, khans, narrow streets, hammams, churches, mosques and a population from various origins and of different confessions. In opposition to Jerusalem, Istanbul or Damascus, Beirut did not have distinct confessional quarters and “there was no professional segregation between confessions, nor was there any opposition between the districts and production activities, and the white *izar* covered all women, Christian and Muslim alike”.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Makdisi, Ussama: *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000. 84–86.

<sup>9</sup> Weiss-Green: *A Survey of Arab History*. American University of Cairo, 1995. 249–50.

<sup>10</sup> Makdisi, 133–136.

<sup>11</sup> Barakat, Liliane Buccianti: “Beirut – A City With So Many Faces.” In: *Dela* 21. 2004. 485–493., available: [http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/geo/Publikacije/Dela/files/Dela\\_21/043a%20baracat.pdf](http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/oddelki/geo/Publikacije/Dela/files/Dela_21/043a%20baracat.pdf)

As Samir Khalaf pointed out, the most definitive symptoms of urbanisation – rural exodus and the spill of the population beyond its medieval walls – did not really appear in any substantial form until the 1860s.<sup>12</sup> The decisive moment in the history of the city was when Ibrahim Pasha made it an administrative centre during the Egyptian occupation (1832–1841). The growing political importance led to the development of the harbour into the major import-export trading centre for Mount Lebanon and the Syrian hinterland and to the rise of a new urban commercial bourgeoisie.<sup>13</sup> When the Ottomans regained control, Beirut was made the capital first of the wilayet of Sidon in 1842, later that of the wilayet of Beirut from 1883. Thus, urbanization in Beirut was more a precedent or antecedent to economic development than its result.<sup>14</sup>

It is true that after the war in 1860 refugees from Damascus and Mount Lebanon have created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion in Beirut, still, the city was not profoundly affected by the socio-political tensions between 1840 and 1860. According to Leila Fawaz as compared to the clashes in Mount Lebanon, Beirut enjoyed a certain degree of stability during the nineteenth century despite the vast influx of refugees. When sectarian tensions broke out in the capital from time to time, mostly due to the forced westernisation and Christian economical dominance, the urban notables of different confessions made joint efforts for a quick settlement.<sup>15</sup>

Beirut grossly benefitted from the Ottoman urban reforms carried out in response to the strengthening western influence in the region. Construction of infrastructures and communication took place: the harbour was widened, a road and then a railroad joined Beirut to Damascus; telegraph and gas lighting were installed, electric tramway was inaugurated, and streets were paved. The Ottoman government expanded the city beyond its walls and a new centre of business and transportation activity emerged on the eastern side *extra muros*, in the area where trade caravans gathered and organized before entering the city. The place later was named as Martyrs' Square in memory of those six Lebanese patriots who rose against the Ottoman rule.<sup>16</sup> This area further developed when the Ottomans transformed a part of it into a public garden on the northern side of which the Petit Sérail (the Small Government Palace) was built in 1884.<sup>17</sup> Edifices such as the Beirut's City Hall, Train Station, the Grand Sérail, and the Ottoman Bank were constructed in this period. The last Ottoman wall was demolished in 1915.

As Ralph Bodenstein writes "the intensified trade and the increasing political presence of European powers – particularly in the wake of the 1860s civil clashes in Mount Lebanon and Damascus – made Beirut an interface between the European countries and the United

<sup>12</sup> Khalaf, Samir: *The Heart of Beirut: Reclaiming the Bourj*. Saqi, London, 2006. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Bodenstein, Ralph: "Housing the Foreign." In: Jens Hanssen – Thomas Philip – Stefan Weber (ed.): *The Empire in the City...* 105–127.

<sup>14</sup> Khalaf, Samir – Kongstad, Per: *Hamra of Beirut...* 3.

<sup>15</sup> The most serious of such clashes were the great riots of September 1903 between Greek Orthodox and Sunni groups. Fawaz, Leila: *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 1983.

<sup>16</sup> Sarkis, Hashim: "A Vital Void Reconstructions of Downtown Beirut." In: Vale, Lawrence J. – Campanella, Thomas J. (ed.): *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster*. OUP, Oxford, 2005. 281–298.

<sup>17</sup> Khalaf, 63.

States on the one hand and the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire on the other hand.”<sup>18</sup> Foreign consulates, missionary and educational institutions were established; next to the numerous primary and secondary schools, American Protestant missionaries built the first university in Beirut in 1866 followed by St. Joseph University, established by the Jesuits mission in 1875. Between 1860 and 1880, Europeans invested massively into silk economy, more than 200 mechanical spinning mills were set up in the mountains. Some, mostly Christian traders, became European trade agents and grossly benefited from the concentration of western interests. The new local bourgeoisie identified more and more with western cultural values and took charge most of the innovations indispensable to the modernization of a city such as transport, lighting, food and public health.<sup>19</sup> In the framework of the *Tanzimat* (Ottoman reforms initiated in 1839), new administrative divisions were introduced to reassert their more or less direct rule over Lebanon, causing a growing opposition between the Turkish power and the emerging local bourgeoisie.<sup>20</sup> From about 10.000 inhabitants in 1840 the population rose to around 120.000 in 1900 accompanied by the mushrooming development of new residential quarters *extra muros*.<sup>21</sup>

It is also necessary to acknowledge that unlike the *mutasarrifiyya* of Mt. Lebanon, Beirut's main institution of government, the municipal council, was not institutionalized into confessional quotas (what is referred to in Lebanon as the *sitta sitta mukarrar* logic) until the French Mandate period. A chart of the composition of first one hundred popularly elected municipal councillors between 1868 and 1908 demonstrates how widely the religious affiliations of its twelve members oscillated. Unlike in Istanbul and Alexandria, after 1877 foreigners were barred from municipal elections in Beirut. According to Hanssen the municipal council defended the interests of the city against European capitalism and colonialism, and against the Ottoman imperial government.<sup>22</sup> He argues that the Ottoman government's decision to listen to the calls for the creation of a new province around Beirut and grant it provincial capital status in 1888 paved the way for fundamental urban and regional reconfigurations long before colonial policies during the French Mandate period. This new Ottoman province came to constitute the territorial embodiment of regional self-determination for Arab nationalists in Beirut until the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I.

## II. Zuqaq al-Blat

### 1. Setting

Zuqāq al-Balāṭ, which means “cobble lane” in Arabic is the name of a Beirut neighbourhood whose main street, named after Amin Beyhum, was the first paved road outside the old town, built in the framework of the infrastructure works during Egyptian

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<sup>18</sup> Bodenstein, 106.

<sup>19</sup> Barakat, 487.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Bodenstein, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Review by Jens Hanssen...

rule (1831–1840). The quarter stretches between the Grand Sérail in the north and the Greek Catholic Patriarchate in the south. It is one of the *extra muros* areas of Beirut that developed from middle of the nineteenth century as a residential quarter for the Beirut bourgeoisie who left their old houses *intra muros* and built villa residences in the orchards and gardens on the hills overlooking the old town and the sea.<sup>23</sup>

Zuqaq el-Blat occupies a unique position within Beirut's urban fabric and it can be considered as a microcosm of the history of modern Beirut. It was one of the city's first sites of urban expansion before 1840; during the Civil War (1975–1990) parts of the district were on the Green Line (demarcation zone) between Christian East and Muslim West-Beirut. After the war rebuilding affected only the northern parts because of its proximity to the downtown commercial centre but completely neglected the south-eastern region, a fact that well exemplifies the anomalies of Lebanon's post-war reconstruction both in its social and political aspects.

The introduction of an outstanding interdisciplinary study *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut* refers to the Lebanese writer and biographer Paul Suwayd, stating that three distinct cultural centres existed in mid-nineteenth century Beirut, the oldest of which was Zuqaq el-Blat "where from the 1840s to the 1880s, the Boustanis and Yazijis taught, wrote and published an enormous range of Arabic literature and appealed to their compatriots to embrace social and confessional harmony".<sup>24</sup> It was here that the Yazijis developed Modern Standard Arabic, taught and wrote about Ottoman, Arab and Syrian patriotism. Boutrus and Salim al-Boustani considered the centrality of their country in the global economy as well as the geographical division of labour between *Bab Beirut* and *Batn Syria* in the 1880s. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani and Khalil Sarkis, the publishers of the two main newspapers, *Thamarat al-Funun* and *Lisan al-Hal* were residents of this district.<sup>25</sup>

In the past, Zuqaq el-Blat was a place for wealth and luxury. From a mainly agri- and horticultural area outside the city walls in the 1820s it turned to become first a garden suburb with growing educational institutions in its golden age, and later, in the second half of the twentieth century to a densely populated pericentral city quarter.<sup>26</sup> A comparison of the maps of the 1840s with the 1876 Löytved map shows that the urbanisation of Zuqaq el-Blat advanced vigorously from the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> The Ottoman infantry barracks (later, in 1920 turned into the "Grand Sérail"), a military hospital (erected in the 1860s and turned into the Palais de Justice in 1920), the residence of the *mutasarrifs*, consulates, and the establishment of schools ensured the high status of the quarter and made it attractive for foreigners as well. Ottomans and Europeans rented lodgings from local owners, shared their houses and socialised with them,<sup>28</sup> so even if the number of foreigners

<sup>23</sup> Bodenstein, 105–106.

<sup>24</sup> Gebhardt, Hans (ed.): *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut. The Quarter of Zokak el-Blat*. Beirut: Texte und Studien 97. Orient-Institut der DMG Beirut, 2005. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Review by Jens Hanssen...

<sup>26</sup> Bodenstein, Ralph: "The Making and Remaking of Zokak el-Blat." In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut*, 36–107.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 63.

<sup>28</sup> Özveren, Yaşar Eytüp: *The Making and Unmaking of an Ottoman Port-City: Nineteenth Century Beirut, Its Hinterland, and the World-Economy*. Ph.D. diss., State University of New York, Binghamton, 1990. 151. Quoted by Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 65.

in the city was not more than 1-3 per cent of the population until the French Mandate Period,<sup>29</sup> together with the local upper- and middle class they created 'foreign-native continuum' that was characteristic of the late nineteenth-century Beirut.<sup>30</sup>

To mention only a few significant religious institutions of this quarter: the Armenian Prelacy of Lebanon was also seated here in 1920 with its centre the St. Nishan Armenian Orthodox Church built later, in 1938, just south of the Sérail. At the centre of the quarter stands a Sunni mosque dating from the mid nineteenth century, now dominated by the sunni-sufi group al-Ahbash.<sup>31</sup> At the northern border of Zuqaq el-Blat, below the hilltop Grand Sérail building stands Beirut's only Synagogue, Maghen Abraham. The surrounding area, known as Wadi Abou Jamil, was historically the Jewish neighbourhood of Beirut. The Selim Tarrab Talmudic School building was demolished sometime after 2006.<sup>32</sup>

In Zuqaq el-Blat the socio-economic status of the neighbour was always more important than his religious affiliation. Until the mid twentieth century, residences were inhabited by better off people from different confessions such as later, in the years of degradation, slums are housing the poor of different ethnic and religious background (Kurds, Palestinians, Shiites, Sunnis). According to the family names of the population of Zuqaq el-Blat was mixed, mostly Sunnis lived together with Christians of all denominations, and their mansions were surrounded by the modest houses of their clients. As a late resident, Lamis Mukhayesh recalls her memories from the 1950s: "On religious holidays, we all celebrated together. In Rue Mar Elias, where Christians and Muslims used to live, they decorated for Christmas as well as for Ramadan."<sup>33</sup> The large residences of mercantile families were the first in the quarter, but later became surrounded by lower and middle class homes, forming a heterogeneous settlement pattern common in the Middle East.<sup>34</sup>

Despite the many political and consequently social and architectural changes, the quarter did not cease to be a cultural centre till the outbreak of the war. A good example for this fact is the mansion of Maud Farjallah that gave place to Beirut's longest-lived weekly salon where politicians, foreign diplomats and intellectuals met between World War I and 1963. The *Pios Building* was another famous place where in the 1950s and 1960s intellectuals, painters, and journalists gathered regularly.<sup>35</sup> In his book *Al-Hawajis al-Aqalliyya (Minority Anxieties)*, the Lebanese author Ramez Khalil Sarkis, born in the quarter in 1921, describes Zuqaq el-Blat as a model cosmopolitan space. According to him, the district was inhabited by middle class "spiritual families" – using Michel Chiha's term: *al-'ā'ilāt al-ruhiyya* – who created an atmosphere of mutual respect and support that represented "the essence and phenomenon of Beirut in particular and Lebanon in general and intuitively held the firm belief in their humble popular wisdom that if only we

<sup>29</sup> Fawaz, Leila: *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*. Cambridge (Mass.), 1983. 52.

<sup>30</sup> Özveren, *The Making and Unmaking...* Quoted by Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 65.

<sup>31</sup> "Walking Through Zokak el-Blat." In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 23–33.

<sup>32</sup> <http://members.virtualtourist.com/m/ac11c/1b809c/4/?o=1&i=3>

<sup>33</sup> Stolleis, Friederike: "The Inhabitants of Zokak el-Blat." In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 175–211.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 178.

<sup>35</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 30.

[Lebanese] lived together and understood each other we'd be safe and well."<sup>36</sup> The social and cultural bonds of Maronites, Sunnis, Greek Catholics, Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and Protestants – that Sarkis calls *al-rābiṭa al-buṣṭāniyya* – were further strengthened by “brotherhood of milk” (*ukhūwat al-ḥalīb*), a good example of which is the “milk bond” that connected the Sunni Yamouts to the Sarkis family. Khalil Sarkis brings examples how these ties created solidarity even in the years of the war.<sup>37</sup>

## 2. Golden Age

Zuqaq el-Blat played a prominent role in the Arab cultural renewal which took place in different places in the Arab World. One major figure in this renewal, especially in education and Arabic language modernization, is Boutros al-Boustani who founded the National School in 1863.<sup>38</sup> Due to the journalistic and educational efforts, it became a place where leading Syro-Lebanese, Arab-Ottoman and Egyptian intellectuals met since the second half of the nineteenth century. These thinkers played a decisive role in the development of the most important trends of modern Arab political thought – Ottomanism, Arabism, Syrianism and Muslim Reformism. Although Lebanism as a national ideology emerged only during and immediately after World War I, its most influential promoter, Michel Chiha (1891–1954) was also rooted in Zuqaq el-Blat's intellectual circles. It was also this quarter where the serialised Arabic novel and the newspaper commentary took their first forms as articulators of political expression.<sup>39</sup>

The relative stability in Beirut and Mount Lebanon after 1860, under the Ottoman rule, encouraged the scholarly renaissance that took place in this diverse, dynamic, late-Ottoman bourgeois district.<sup>40</sup> Residents of Zuqaq el-Blat were among others Boutros al-Boustani (1818–1883), Khalil Sarkis (1842–1915), Abd el-Qader Qabbani (1837–1935), Hussein Beyhum (1833–1881), Ahmad Abbas al-Azhari (1852–1929).<sup>41</sup> By the turn of the century, these intellectuals, journalists, teachers, national politicians, and municipal councillors had already formed flourishing interconfessional networks “of neighbours who visited each other, participated in the same regular saloons and were employed in the same institutions. (...) They wrote school books, edited newspapers and left behind foundational texts of modern political thought and social reform that continued to inspire scholars of the Middle East into the age of decolonisation, nationalism and beyond.”<sup>42</sup>

The ideas of the intellectual elite connected to Arabic Revival (*al-nahda al-‘arabiyya*) were spread in the numerous primary and secondary schools of the quarter by novel teaching methods that combined Arab tradition with the most important principles and

<sup>36</sup> *Al-Hawājīs al-Aqalliyya: Min Zuqāq al Blat ila Kensington*. Beirut, 1993. 25–26. Quoted in *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 3–4.

<sup>37</sup> Sarkis, 10–12. In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 4.

<sup>38</sup> Yazbaq, Ibrahim Yusuf: *Al-Awraq al-Lubnaniyya*. Vol. 1, Beirut, 1955. 118. Quoted in *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 6.

<sup>39</sup> Hanssen, Jens: “The Birth of an Education Quarter.” In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 143–174.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 144.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 165–174.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 144–145.

practices of the European enlightenment. Consequently, "the guarantors of the remarkably stable hegemony of Beirut's late Ottoman bourgeois public sphere were secondary school students who – as audience and later as articulators – came of age between the 1860s and 1880s."<sup>43</sup> According to Jens Hanssen "the literary networks, newspaper journalists, schools and teachers generated a communication- and information-based public sphere which mediated between Beirut's population, the Ottoman state and foreign missionaries. Almost 2500 pupils studied in these institutions the most important of which were Boutros al-Boustani's National School (*al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya*) inaugurated in 1866, one of the three imperial lyceums, the *Madrasa Sultaniyya*, opened in 1883, the Ottoman College (*'Uthmaniyya*) founded in 1895 by Ahmad 'Abbas al-Azhari, and the Greek Catholic Patriarchal School (*Patrarkiyya*), four of the most prestigious secondary schools in Bilad al-Sham. The School of Arts and Crafts (*Sanayeh*) an industrial education complex concentrating on teaching practical skills for underprivileged children was opened in 1907, and the *Rushdiyya* was opened in 1910, called (from *rushd*, adolescence), an advanced primary school brought into existence by the Ottoman Public School Law of 1869 and instituted thereafter throughout the empire."<sup>44</sup>

For almost 150 years a cross-confessional upper and middle-class population formed the intellectual life of Zuqayq al-Blat among whom Christians were a relative minority, still their role proved to be formative owing to such unique and outstanding figures as Boutros Boustani. In his National School pupils and teachers of all sects and beliefs were guaranteed freedom to carry out their respective religious practices. Proselytizing was strictly prohibited, and educators shared their knowledge and collaborated in service of the future generations. A contemporary American missionary drew attention to the remarkable fact that "in little over three years after the dreadful scenes of massacres and blood[shed] in 1860, there should be gathered in Beirut a school of 115 boarders composed of almost all various sects in the land and that children of Moslem sheikhs and papal priests, and Druze okkals should study side by side."<sup>45</sup> To teach Islamic religion and philosophy, the protestant Boutros al-Bustani invited the prominent scholar, Ahmad 'Abbas, a graduate from al-Azhar University in Cairo. The students came from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq, Istanbul and Greece, and among the locals we find persons like Ibrahim Bey al-Aswad, 'Abd al-Qadir Dana, 'Abd al-Qadir Qabbani who by the turn of the century became the leading intellectuals and municipal councillors in Beirut.<sup>46</sup>

As early as in 1867 the teachers of the National School founded the interconfessional *Syrian Scientific Society* (*al-Jam'iyya al-'ilmiyya al-Sūriyya*) "for the spread of knowledge, science and arts".<sup>47</sup> In 1875 Shaykh Youssef Assir (1815–1889), the teacher of Arabic grammar in Boustani's school founded the *Society of Arts* (*Jam'iyyat al-funūn*), which put more emphasis on applied arts and practical skills than on foreign languages and liberal arts. The society launched a bi-weekly newspaper *Thamarāt al-Funūn* and its Muslim

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 147.

<sup>45</sup> American Board of Commissioners, Foreign Missions, 16.8.1., *Syrian Mission* vol. 5, *Annual Report of the Beirut Station for 1863*. Quoted in *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 32.

<sup>46</sup> Hanssen, Jens: "The Birth of an Education Quarter." In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 152.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 153–4.



activists formed the *Maqassed* – Islamic Benevolent Society – in 1878 “to promote modern state education, uphold Islamic morality and embrace the principles of the Ottoman Public Education Law of 1869”. Its founder ‘Abd al-Qadir Qabbani aimed to follow the Jewish and Christian curricula as examples and launched two schools for Muslim girls as well.<sup>48</sup> The Muslim schools of Zuqaq el-Blat pursued the liberal arts tradition, their aim was to produce educated workforce for the institutions of modern society.<sup>49</sup> The deans of the Ottoman College were prominent journalists, such as Ahmad Tabbara, the owner of the Beirut newspaper *al-Ittihad al-‘Uthmani*, and ‘Abd al-Ghani al-‘Uraysi, the owner of *al-Mufid*, and leading politicians of the Beirut Reform Movement during the Young Turk Period (1889–1908). Among the teachers we find two influential female figures as well, such as ‘Afifa and Zahida Shihab.<sup>50</sup>

After the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 many refugees arrived to Beirut, among them the leading Egyptian reformist Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905), who was enthusiastically accepted by the Zuqaq el-Blat intellectuals. ‘Abduh spread the ideas of reform in Lebanon and gained many disciples, both Christians and Muslims through writings as well teaching Islamic theology in the high school al-Madrasa al-Sultaniyya.<sup>51</sup>

Between 1827 and 1871 the Protestant missionary work centred around Zuqaq el-Blat, and their schools had a formative influence on the intellectual life of the quarter. The Mission House was set up in 1832 followed by the first printing press in the Middle East in 1853. The library of the Mission – where Eli Smith began to translate the Bible into Arabic – housed valuable Arabic manuscripts and liturgical literature.<sup>52</sup> With the leadership of Boutros al-Boustani, local members of the Protestant Congregation founded the Native Syrian Church in 1848. The most important missionary institution the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut), was opened in 1866, and in 1870 moved to away to the more exclusive Ras Beirut.<sup>53</sup> One of the quarter’s earliest school complexes was established in 1860 by the British Syrian Missions and later became the Lebanese Evangelical School.

As Jens Hanssen stresses, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “Zuqaq el Blat became the meeting place of leading members of both strands of the Arabic revival – the Christian secularists of Beirut and Alexandria and the Islamic reform movement of Damascus and Cairo”.<sup>54</sup> Hanssen also mentions an assumption according to which some Zuqaq el-Blat intellectuals formed the secret society called *Union of the Three Faiths* with the aim to “unite the Islamic, Christian and Jewish faiths and to co-operate in relieving the East of the pressure exerted by the West”.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 154–5.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 157.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 161.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 157–8.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 149–150.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 150.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 158.

<sup>55</sup> Amin, Osman: *Muhammad Abduh* (1944), translated from Arabic by Charles Wendel. Washington, 1953. 7. Quoted by Hanssen, Jens: “The Birth of an Education Quarter.” In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 158.

On the basis of Hanssen's study a high degree of interconnectedness, moreover intimacy can be supposed between Muslim and Christian scholar circles. The intellectual atmosphere of Zuqaq el-Blat provided not only an open space to negotiate common ground between Christian and Muslim visions of Lebanon but also set a promising path for Lebanon's political culture.

### III. Stages of Decline

#### 1. French Mandate

When the Ottoman Empire collapsed at the end of the World War I, the French gained control over Syria. The five provinces that make up present-day Lebanon were soon separated from the rest of Syria pleading that its Christian population needed protection. Besides Beirut and Mount Lebanon, "Greater Lebanon" included the coastline (Sahil), the Beqaa Valley and Anti-Lebanon as well, thus including significant number of Druze, Shiites and Sunnis into the would be state. Consequently, Lebanese Christians, of which the Maronites were the largest subgrouping, now constituted barely more than 50 per cent of the population, while the number of Sunnis multiplied eightfold, and the Shiites fourfold. Thus the quota system that was accepted on the basis of the national census of 1932, and made Maronites the official majority assuring them political dominance as opposed to the numerical majority of the Shiite community, generated mistrust and ignited alienation.<sup>56</sup>

The Maronites had indicated precisely what they wanted, mobilized into politics earlier than the Muslims and had – with the help of the French – dominated the political and the economic system. A western oriented business class pulled in foreign capital, but the institutional, politico-sectarian structure created gross social inequalities and disparity in economic development between Beirut and the rest of the country. Greater Beirut and the mountainous areas in south and north of the city were like a prosperous mini state while the Akkar region in the north, Jabal al-'Amil in the south and Beqaa Valley in the east, populated by mostly Sunni and Shiite Muslims, were zones of economic stagnation.<sup>57</sup>

Under the French Mandate, serious efforts were initiated to prepare master plans by the architect and planner Michel Ecochard (1905–1985) for Beirut. Functionalism and rationalism set such an urban zoning in which the segregation of functions became the key

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<sup>56</sup> The census of 1932 concluded that there was a demographical 5:6 proportion between Muslims and Christians of the population. Under French pressure the presidency went to a Christian, the premier to a Sunni and speakership to Shiite. On the basis of the 1932 census, parliament seats were divided according to a six-to-five Christian/Muslim ratio. The constitution gave the president veto power over any legislation approved by parliament, virtually ensuring that the 6:5 ratio would not be revised in the event that the population distribution changed. See: Sarkis, 51.

<sup>57</sup> Nicolaysen, Leif G. N.: *Consociationalism and Segmented Cleavages: The Case of Lebanon*. Master thesis in Political Science, STV 3902, Department of Political Science Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø, May 2008. 26.

concept.<sup>58</sup> In order to eradicate the old urban order major constructions such as the National Museum of Beirut, the Parliament, the Frenchmen avenue – a replica of the Englishmen Promenade in Nice were carried out starting in 1924. During the 1930s, the old Arab core disappeared to be replaced by a modern French style centralization set around the Parliament: Place de l'Étoile (the Star Square), with large orthogonal arteries named after French heroes. Military cemeteries appeared, signboards were written in French, khans were transformed into theatres and cinemas. The Lebanese traditional house increased in height thanks to new building techniques and the ochre colour became dominant in the city.<sup>59</sup> The confessional minorities (Christian, Jewish, a small Sunnite elite as well as the Armenian refugees) beneficiating from the support of the mandatory country adopted European customs in every field of life.

However, the new middle class' residential areas were sited in locations far from the elites, so it was the beginning of social exclusion in the city. In the new suburbs where social and economic discomfort prevailed, youth movements, charities and sports clubs sprang up. In order to gain political support they put themselves under the protection of sectarian based parties; and later, during the unrest in 1958 and in the civil war, constituted manpower for the militias.<sup>60</sup>

Confessionalism gradually drove the non-Christian communities to seek a similar type of mobilization, beginning in the 1940s as an effort to balance the growth of Christian influence. As a result, this mode of modernization forced the process of urbanization to be framed by a confessional form. Therefore, instead of assuming a class-based and nationally inclusive character, urban transformation was shaped by group solidarity. Privileged confessional groups concentrated themselves in the urban centres, whereas disadvantaged communities ended up in the suburbs and peripheries. Within this context, urbanization in Lebanon has been a process of displacing people from a familiar rural setting but at the same time it has forced the urban social actors to resurrect their primordial allegiances, such as familism, regionalism and sectarianism, in order to tackle the hardships of urban life providing members of a given group with all sorts of welfare, health and education services.<sup>61</sup> As Samir Khalaf pointed out, "urbanization in Beirut as a physical and ecological phenomena has not been accompanied by an equal degree of urbanism as a way of life".<sup>62</sup>

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During the Mandate period, Zuqaq el-Blat remained an important locus of power, housing institutions of colonial administration, such as the seat of the French High

<sup>58</sup> Ghorayeb, M.: "The work and influence of Michel Ecochard in Lebanon." In: Rowe, P. – Sarkis, H. (eds.): *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*. Prestel-Verlag, 1998. 106–121.

<sup>59</sup> Barakat, 488.

<sup>60</sup> Soliman, 23.

<sup>61</sup> Salamey, Imad – Tabar, Paul: "Consociational Democracy and Urban Sustainability: Transforming the Confessional Divides in Beirut." In: *Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 7, Nos. 2–3, June–September 2008. 239–263.

<sup>62</sup> Khalaf – Kongstad: *Hamra...* 3.

Commissioner (accommodated in the Grand Sérail), the Law Courts, and the French Admiralty.<sup>63</sup> However, while before the introduction of the confessional system enlightened ideas and intellectual ties proved to be stronger than kinship, in the coming decades estrangement and distancing took over.<sup>64</sup>

From the 1920s the concentration of economical activities and job opportunities (mostly on the construction sites) in centre Beirut generated Shiite, Kurd, and Armenian settlement in Zuqaq el-Blat because of its proximity to the city centre. Shiites arrived from the annexed Jabal 'Amil and the Beqaa valley, while Armenians and Kurds were refugees from neighbouring countries. The migration caused a significant population growth in the quarter between 1921 and 1931 from 6200 to 8200 inhabitants. Consequently, between 1920 and 1945, the number of buildings increased by about 30 per cent.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, the settlement of poorer migrants made some upper and middle-class families leave Zuqaq el-Blat.

## 2. Beirut, "Open City"

The laissez-faire politics of presidents Béchara el-Khoury (1943–1952) and Camille Chamoun (1952–1958) created economic prosperity for Beirut. The Banking Secrecy (1956) transformed the capital into a "safe for fuel income". Lebanon reached the peak of its economic success in the mid-1960's, but the stability and prosperity was paralyzed by the collapse of Intra Bank, the country's most important financial institution, in 1966. Between the 1940s and 1960s the Lebanese government shaped the face of the growing metropolis from the plans of foreign experts like Écochard, Egli and Doxiadis, by building bypass roads north of downtown.<sup>66</sup>

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s the rapid urbanization in metropolitan Beirut, or "Greater Beirut", coincided with dramatic demographic expansion. In 1960 Greater Beirut's population stood at 450,000 residents, but the number had increased threefold by 1975 to 1,250,000.<sup>67</sup> This rapid expansion of the city population initially favoured the growth of middle-class and secular neighbourhoods where city and market growth weakened confessional demarcations.<sup>68</sup> However, as opposed to the capital, rural areas remained underdeveloped, thus social inequality and tensions were constantly on the rise in spite of the reform politics of the Shihab era (1958–1964). The consequent massive rural migration presented a major challenge to both the traditional sectarian and secular urban areas and catalyzed a rising contention over the sectarian distribution of urban space and state resources. According to the analysis of I. Salamey and P. Tabar this led to outbursts of violent sectarian conflicts for the past 50 years that "have often undermined the many 'consociational' aspects of the urban communities".<sup>69</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 67.

<sup>64</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 5.

<sup>65</sup> Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 69.

<sup>66</sup> Sarkis, 290.

<sup>67</sup> Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy...* 242.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 247.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 242.

The centre belonged to the confessionally mixed high and middle-class bourgeoisie. West of downtown, an area called Ras Beirut "was an important hub for literary and publishing activities that made Beirut centre of Arabic-language free press. Finally, the concentration of students, writers, journalists, academics, and radicals in Ras Beirut meant that the area enjoyed an atmosphere of social permissiveness".<sup>70</sup> Arab tourists and businessmen from the Gulf States came in great number to Beirut which, for them, represented Switzerland (Banking Secrecy), Monaco (Casino) and Paris for its shops and leisure activities. A second down-town, Hamra street was established with offices, hotels, cinemas, merchant galleries making out of this avenue the Middle-East Champs-Élysées. On the eve of the war, and in order to satisfy the needs of a totally addicted consumers' society, a third urban pole construction was about to start in Sodeco street in Ashrafiyeh. Real-estate investments multiplied and the number of new suburbs increased. The capital was named the Greater Beirut with more than one million inhabitants annexing the narrow coastal plain as well.<sup>71</sup>

Since the end of World War II, Beirut witnessed a heavy population shift due to sociopolitical and economic crises. The inflow of capital and investments attracted not only the rural population of the interior but also refugees. In the villages recently attached to the capital second generation rural migrants lived, essentially wage-earners, officers and craftsmen. Between this intensifying ring and what could be considered as the middle-suburb of Beirut, articulated the "Misery belt" constituted of the Palestinian camps and the spontaneous districts of mostly Shiites migrants fleeing from the Israeli retaliations in the South.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, cells of poverty took roots in unhealthy zones such as Karm el-Zeitoun and Hayy al-Syrian. The informal, illegal suburbs started to mushroom as "the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses".<sup>73</sup> Urban informality thus often managed through illegal attempts of the low and middle strata of the society to restore their "space" or "order" to the urban landscape.<sup>74</sup> As Barakat claims "their inhabitants were 'the left out' population, forgotten by the posterity and growth enjoyed by the 'first category citizens'. This situation provoked resentment and allowed the militias to recruit among the frustrated youngsters, offering them an ideology based on fighting for their rights and taking their revenge".<sup>75</sup> The French planners did not touch the informal areas surrounding the city of Beirut for religious and political reasons.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Nagal, Caroline: "Reconstructing space, re-creating memory: sectarian politics and urban development in post-war Beirut." *Political Geography*, 2002. 719.

<sup>71</sup> Barakat, 489.

<sup>72</sup> Shortly after the last French troops withdrew from Lebanon in 1946, more than 110,000 Palestinian refugees arrived in the aftermath of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War additional Palestinian refugees, and in 1970 thousands of Palestinian expelled militiamen from Jordan arrived. Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization started to attack Israel from the politically and militarily weak Lebanon.

<sup>73</sup> De Soto, H.: *The Other Path: The Invisible revolution in the Third World*. Harper and Row Publisher Inc., New York, 1989. Quoted by Soliman, 18.

<sup>74</sup> Soliman, 19.

<sup>75</sup> Barakat, 490.

<sup>76</sup> Soliman, 24.

Consequently, the social dimension gained importance on the Lebanese political map. Migration offered political leaders a reservoir of desperate youth becoming increasingly a powerful resource of violence. Michael Johnson described how political patrons utilised the services of their clients and in turn provided them with social services, employment and legal protection thus merging class domination with the confessional modes of social organisation.<sup>77</sup> Still, newly arrived migrants were deprived of the political representation in the capital since Lebanese electoral law required everyone to vote in their place of birth.<sup>78</sup> As would one expect, the youth got radicalized in similar fragile conditions. The extremist leftists and the nationalist parties exploited fully these conditions. M. Johnson again provides an accurate description of this situation when he asserts that "Beirut's sectarian violence, then, was neither primordial, nor a rural import. For the poor it was, rather the outcome of confessional or 'ethnic' strategies devised to cope with social inequality under conditions of intense urbanisation. For the ruling elites it was a means to defend social and political privilege".<sup>79</sup>

Since Shiite immigrants represented largely unskilled labour, they lacked financial resources and remained dependent on the better-off Shiites, thus replicating the feudal structures of the countryside.<sup>80</sup> A fact, that by the 1970s resulted in the formation of Musa Sadr's Amal movement, and later led to the birth of Hezbollah as well.<sup>81</sup>

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In the southern and eastern outskirts slum like settlements evolved a process that affected the eastern part of Zuqaq el-Blat as well. After the independence in 1943 till the outbreak of the civil war in 1975 the immigration – mainly of the Shiites from South Lebanon and the Beqaa – accelerated, and the quarter's residential quality of life constantly deteriorated since no effective efforts were made to adjust urban planning and social housing projects corresponding to the new social reality. In the same period the historic fabric of Zuqaq el-Blat, more than 45 per cent of the buildings were demolished due to the construction of the Avenue Fouad Chéhab and the new airport road.<sup>82</sup> The urbanisation in this quarter as in most parts of Beirut was essentially unplanned and as the estate surveyor

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<sup>77</sup> Johnson, Michael: *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State, 1840–1985*. London, 1986.

<sup>78</sup> The system assigns voters to electoral districts of origin rather than residence, namely their villages and remote areas under sectarian control. Most voters who reside in mixed religious neighborhoods in Beirut or its suburbs, for example, have been forced to vote for sectarian candidates running in their respective villages and hometowns, their voting districts of origin. This electoral mechanism has weakened residential ties to the living space, establishing political alienation and a fragmented sense of urban identity. See: Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy...* 248–249.

<sup>79</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 14.

<sup>80</sup> Stolleis, 181.

<sup>81</sup> Amal and Hezbollah are two Shiite Muslim Political movements. The former emerged in the mid-1970s with the outbreak of the civil war, and the latter emerged in 1982 with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

<sup>82</sup> Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 82.

of British Embassy remarked in 1963, the neighbourhood was about to "become increasingly slummy".<sup>83</sup>

The exodus of the mainly Christian upper-class inhabitants increased in the 1960s and continued into the civil war. Their late Ottoman mansions were neglected, transformed and inhabited by poor migrants. What happened in the eastern area was in sharp contrast to the large-scale construction works in the western part of the quarter which was near to the strikingly developing Ras Beirut area with its new commercial centre of Hamra. Between the late 1940s and the mid 1960s (till the crisis generated by the Intra Bank crash in 1966) high rise office buildings and blocks of flats were erected in western Zuqaq el-Blat, very often in the amputated gardens of the late Ottoman mansions. Two new boulevards were constructed in this quarter based on the master plan of 1954 and on the adopted parts of Écochard's *Masterplan for Metropolitan Beirut 1963/64*. However, the lack of investment security from the 1960s led to the neglect of both the implementation of the plans and the degradation of the existing buildings.<sup>84</sup> Street extensions, ring roads, axes and arteries were created by cutting through neighbourhoods, demolishing houses and displacing inhabitants, thus causing considerable social friction that more and more took the form of intercommunal tensions.<sup>85</sup>

### 3. War years and post-war reconstruction

The continuing civil war of 1975 led to a radical change in the demographic fabric of Beirut's overall urban structure. The resulting population shifts and migration due to conflict changed the distribution of the population in and around the city radically. The ongoing clashes with Israel from 1972 and the two Israeli invasions (1978;1982) forced a large number of refugees (mostly Palestinians and Shiites living in the South) to move and settle in the periphery of Beirut thus transforming most of the open spaces of the southern suburbs into large informal areas, like the *Dahiya Janubiyya* (the southern suburb).<sup>86</sup> These settlements were of two categories; the first, comprising various social groups of Lebanese and non-Lebanese people, was inside Beirut's administrative border. The second, reserved for Palestinians who were joined by some Lebanese families – basically residential tent-clusters set up on land provided by the state or rented by UNRWA from private property – was in refugees camps in Beirut's suburbs.

Due to the multiplication of waves of internal displacement the demographic structure of the city of Beirut was fragmented in a multitude of confessional territories by which Muslims moved from Eastern Beirut to Western Beirut, and Christians moved into the opposite direction. As Soliman states "this reorganization of population was in line with ethnicity and dominated by militarization, religious ideologies, and the maintenance of political structures that govern through patronage, division and economic oppression".<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Quoted by Bodenstein: *The Making and Remaking...* 36.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* 82–91.

<sup>85</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 13.

<sup>86</sup> Soliman, 19.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

After the civil war a dramatic change in the demographic urban fabric of Beirut has occurred. Also, the division of the city (eastern and western sectors) created new urban centers to meet the needs and demands of population and market mechanisms. Along the coastal line in the southern part of the city of Beirut, as a consequence to the multiple waves of war displaced persons coming from south Lebanon or the Beqaa, informal, illegal habitats proliferated and produced the two largest informal areas, *Dahiya Janubiyya*,<sup>88</sup> and *Dahiya Sharqyya*.<sup>89</sup> To the north of the capital, an urgent and increasing need for lodging accommodation generated an unrestrained real estate speculation.<sup>90</sup> Vacant apartments and sectarian neighbourhoods were occupied by the respectively evicted sectarian groups, known as 'al-mouhajjereen', or war displaced. As an immediate result, secular urban communities' neighbourhoods shrunk considerably and became occupied mostly by displaced families.<sup>91</sup>

The incursions and invasions by Israel into the largely Shiite Southern Lebanon (1993, 1996, 2006) after the end of the civil war continued to force massive waves of Shiite rural-to-urban displacement contributing to the further expansion of the southern suburbs of Beirut, at times reaching the airport's runway.<sup>92</sup>

The Taef agreement (1989) that maintained confessional consociationalism as the working formula of the Lebanese state provided a 'quick fix' rather than a sustainable political arrangement that could have encompassed the urban dynamics within its power-sharing formula.<sup>93</sup> It deliberately ignored the roots of the civil war and set about restoring Beirut's old financial role at the expense of the impoverished and marginalized rural and suburban populations. Little political efforts were invested in the return of internally displaced communities living on the outskirts of the Lebanese cities.<sup>94</sup>

The post-war urban setting in many ways reinforced family ties and made them essential. Consensual solutions that serve the interests of the population and not that of their traditional leaders have so far been impossible to find, since the 1943 National Pact, only sectarian communities have been allowed to become vocal and effective within the Lebanese polity.<sup>95</sup> Consequently, the political leader or *za'im* is playing a major role in shaping the built environment, preserving his socio-political and economic role in the urban

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<sup>88</sup> Dahiya Janubiyya is divided by the north-south axis of the airport road by which two different parts were formulated. The eastern part combines dense old villages (Burj Al Barajneh, Mrayjeh, Harit Hrayk, Ghobeyri, Shiyyah) and peripheral illegal sectors (Amrusseyeh, Hay Al Sillom), while the western part contains major illegal sectors (Jnah, Uzai), legal low-density urbanization (Bir-hassan, Ramlit Al-Baydah), together with relatively large non-urbanized areas. Uzai, a liner and the largest illegal settlement, has been created along the axis linked Beirut and Saidah. This area used to be a sea resort area for Greater Beirut before the civil war. (...) The southern suburb is inhabited by one third of population of Greater Beirut, almost 0.5 million, and occupies an area similar to that of municipal Beirut (respectively 16 and 17.6 square kilometres). See: Soliman, n.1.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>90</sup> Barakat, 490.

<sup>91</sup> Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy...* 248.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* 246.

<sup>94</sup> Soliman, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy...* 245.



setting.<sup>96</sup> Within these neighbourhoods the names of streets, highways, shops, buildings, mosques, parks and every physical space marked with images and symbols, remind the onlooker of the dwellers' affiliations. "A sectarian urban demarcation reaffirms continuity through a strong sense of historic community and common destiny."<sup>97</sup> This urban fragmentation is prevalent "in the clothes as well as in the publicity posting, the non-conformity to religious celebrations, even sport have become a new field of confrontation".<sup>98</sup>

The post-war reconstruction of the city was entrusted to a private company, Solidere (*Société Libanaise pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Centre Ville de Beyrouth*), through a governmental decree that allowed the expropriation, reconstruction and management of all land in the city centre, what covers effectively the area of the "Old Beirut". Thus the reconstruction effort was largely focused on the city centre, in addition to other projects that would be of service to it, such as the airport, highways, and other infrastructure projects. In the last two decades Beirut has witnessed a boom in the demolition of historic buildings, thus giving way to the dominance of the French colonial style of the Mandate period and sweeping away the Ottoman legacy. Owners and tenants were compensated with company shares and critics were offered well-paying jobs.<sup>99</sup> The expropriated landowners became mere shareholders in this new arrangement, along with new international investors.

As in the case of the Maronites and the Sunni, the Shiite community developed to a large extent their economic, cultural, social and welfare activities within the confines of their confessional boundaries.<sup>100</sup> Thus the two Shiite parties (Hezbollah and Amal) had a great influence in shaping *Dahiya Janubiyya*.<sup>101</sup> As Helena Cobban stated, well into the years after 2000 it was still Hezbollah that provided drinking water, electricity and inevitable social services for the Dahiye residents despite all the rich financial sources of the Hariri led Lebanese governments. The significance of this phenomenon becomes clear when one considers that "Hizbullah's effectiveness in this sphere certainly helped build and buttress its political support in many parts of the country".<sup>102</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Soliman, 28.

<sup>97</sup> Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy*... 240.

<sup>98</sup> Barakat, 492.

<sup>99</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut*... 9–10.

<sup>100</sup> Salamey – Tabar: *Consociational Democracy*... 246.

<sup>101</sup> In addition to their political and military roles, they provide social, educational and medical services for Shiites and other Muslim groups inhabiting the urban areas that fall within their sphere of domination. A third party called the Progressive Socialist Party headed by Walid Jumlat, as a zaim of Druzes, played a major role on urban informality in Beirut and in the mountain of Lebanon, and he was later appointed as the minister of dislodged. See: Soliman, n.7.

<sup>102</sup> "Harik, Hamzeh, and other close observers of Hizbullah all agree that Hizbullah's social-service affiliates, law courts, and schools provide their services on a low-cost basis to those Lebanese who need them, whether Muslim or Christian, and that subsidies are available for very-low-income users. Many Christian parents send their children to Hizbullah-run schools, especially in south Lebanon, where they are often judged to provide the best education available." See: Cobban, Helena: "Hizbullah's New Face." *Boston Review*, April–May 2005. Available at: <http://bostonreview.net/BR30.2/cobban.php>

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The spread of urban informality as the most significant phenomenon shaping the space and urban fabric within Beirut reached Zuqaq el-Blat as well. Like most of the periphery or former suburbs in Beirut, it has witnessed arbitrary residential development that caused (and was caused by) serious socioeconomic problems.<sup>103</sup>

Between the mid 1970s and 1985 almost all Maronites and Jews left Zuqaq el-Blat and their abandoned houses were taken by Shiites, Kurds and Palestinians.<sup>104</sup> During the civil strife "Palestinian and left-wing militias roamed the streets of in search of shelter and rooftop firing positions (...)" The only way to avoid being killed or made homeless, as Khalil Sarkis recalls, was through emergency phone calls – begging Sunni political bosses to pressure military leaders to spare their old friends and neighbours. As the war dragged on, such lifelines of communication grew scarcer and more Zuqaqis were driven into exile. Members of the quarter's less fortunate minority communities were disposed to retribution. After Palestinians were killed and mutilated in Christian enclaves north of Beirut, Palestinian militias targeted defenceless victims in the easily accessible Zuqaq el-Blat.<sup>105</sup>

During the war, in the absence of state control, in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the quarter low-quality high-rise blocks of flats were constructed by the new, mostly Sunni owners. This fact helped to minimize problems with the Muslim militias in control of the area. The process continued all through and after the war and later was promoted by the new comer Shiite developers as well, all of whom profited from the very low real-estate prizes in the area at that time.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the war completely finished the destruction of the inherent social composition of the neighbourhood.

The Janus-faced nature of the post war development policy is well illustrated by the fact that irrespective of their cultural heritage and significance, in those parts of the quarter outside the radius of the Beirut Central District no new construction had taken place by 2004. While the northern segment of Zuqaq el-Blat has gradually integrated into the city's expanding commercial centre, its vast stretches of empty land where buildings have been demolished waiting for construction works or excavation to provide valuable underground parking, stand in sharp contrast to the rest of the quarter.<sup>107</sup>

In our days, the neighbourhood lost all its charm and appeal, its most densely populated and poverty ridden areas are now inhabited by Kurds and Shiites where streets and walls are stuffed with the signs and emblems of the two main political parties, the Amal and the Hezbollah. Based on surveys and interviews, Friederike Stolleis claims that the inhabitants of post-war Zuqaq el-Blat are locked up in conflicting claims as to who "owns" the quarter. A central strategy to win supremacy – prevalent as it is in the Middle East since 1948 – is proving precedence in the settlement, in order to confer authority over groups who immigrated more recently.<sup>108</sup> "Today, Nasif and Ibrahim al-Yaziji, Boutros and Selim Boustani, are still considered leading figures in the revival of Arabic literature and Syro-

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<sup>103</sup> Soliman, 29.

<sup>104</sup> Stolleis, 98.

<sup>105</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 8.

<sup>106</sup> Stolleis, 92–95.

<sup>107</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut...* 25.

<sup>108</sup> Stolleis, 175–211.

Lebanese nationalism. Yet the fertile social setting that made their cultural innovations possible, Zuqaq el-Blat, is all but forgotten in Lebanon and the Arab World."<sup>109</sup>

## CONCLUSION

I intended this paper to be a contribution to the ongoing debate among historians about the roots of confessionalism in Lebanon. Oliver Kögler in his study about preservation of historic buildings in Zuqaq el-Blat argues that the battle over architectural heritage is an important aspect of Beirut's post-war urban development. Historic buildings are symbolic sites where conflicting visions of Beirut's future compete and clash with one another.<sup>110</sup> My conviction is that an eventual moment and place of a non-confessional Lebanon was Zuqaq el-Blat in Beirut during the nineteenth century. As part of the Arab cultural and political renewal, it experienced a transforming mechanism which shifted its multi confessional inhabitants into a more inclusive political identity. Nevertheless, external factors, such as the French Mandate, the imposed confessionalism, the influx of Palestinian refugees and PLO fighters, as well as internal ones, including the social disparities between communities, led to continuous tensions, and ultimately to civil war.

In the context of war and post-war, Lebanese political life has been governed by former war chiefs and religious leaders who make use of the social and community territorialisation. It is in their interest to preserve the old militia zones in the capital by exercising political and economical influence, and to exert control over their own communities.

Al-Boustani's National School itself is the symbol of effective collaboration and cohabitation that took place in Beirut in the past. Today, however, amidst the astonishing luxury of the central districts, the school stands as an abandoned place in ruins. Can one hope peaceful co-existence in a country torn apart by such a composite of still bleeding wounds, opposing visions and clashing interests? The answer to this question proves to be difficult as long as no political will attempts at restoring this emblematic institution of national cohabitation and Lebanese solidarity.

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<sup>109</sup> *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut... 2.*

<sup>110</sup> Kögler, Oliver: "Prospects for Preservation of Historic Buildings." In: *History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut... 261–288.*



# ***Egyptian–Hungarian diplomatic relations between World War I and II***

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Egypt and Hungary have a long common historical past, which is characterized by fruitful diplomatic and political cooperation. The twenty years between 1919 and 1939 included a significant, active, and changeable period in the history of diplomatic and political relation between Hungary and Egypt according to the archive material, other sources and articles of the Egyptian press. The chronological frame of this research has a precise starting-, and end-point. The plan of the establishment of a Hungarian Consulate in Cairo on 10 January 1924 can be regarded as the beginning. The final event was on 30 April 1939 when Miklós Horthy, the son of the regent of Hungary, visited Egypt again to negotiate and discuss with Egyptian officials. The period between 1919 and 1939 has been studied on the basis of the sources of the archive of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and the contemporary Arabic, English and French press in Egypt.

## **The historical antecedents of the Egyptian–Hungarian diplomatic relations**

After signing the peace treaty known as “Pozsarevác” between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire had the possibility to establish a consulate in Alexandria, the second largest Egyptian city and the first commercial center in the country. In 1763 Francesco Agostini became the agent in charge of consular affairs, then the empress, Maria Theresa appointed Agostini in 1785 as a consul in Egypt, and he was followed in 1792 by Carlo Di Rossetti, who was responsible for the General Consulate in Cairo until 1805. When he resigned from his post in 1811 Agostini became responsible again for the consular affairs.<sup>1</sup> The General Consul worked in Cairo till 1819. As a consequence of continuous increasing economic activity and trade of Alexandria, he moved again to Alexandria. Cairo and Damietta had vice-consulates, and there was a consular agency authorized to direct the Consular Affairs in Rashid. In 1834 Anton Laurin was appointed to be general consul, who was an experienced diplomat as there were more and more tasks for the diplomatic corps including navigation, commercial, political, and medical affairs. In 1846 the Habsburg representations were restructured: the General

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\* PhD student at the University of Szeged.

<sup>1</sup> In 1819 they appointed George Cavaccó as consul, and Franz Champion as vice-consul.

Consulate in Alexandria supervised both the prosecution Consulate in Cairo, Damietta, as well as the Consular Agency in Rashid and Suez.<sup>2</sup>

The main reason for the establishment of diplomatic representation in Suez and Port Said was the growing trade-traffic coming from India and other eastern countries. On 17 August 1871 Ottó Szillas was sent and appointed as consul in Suez. From 1878 until World War I an honorary consular agency worked in Suez because its role had decreased significantly.<sup>3</sup>

In 1910 the authorities and the geographical division of the diplomatic corps of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were restructured as follows: 1. General Consulate in Cairo, its authorities extended to the whole Egypt; 2. Consulate in Alexandria; 3. Consulate in Cairo (Court consulate as well); 4. Consulate in Port Said (Court consulate as well); 5. Consulate in Khartoum (the Court consulate as well), and its authority included all the Sudanese territory.<sup>4</sup>

After the outbreak of World War I the representative of the United States received the authorities and functions of the Consul of Austria-Hungary in Cairo. The Austrian-Hungarian diplomatic presence lasted in Cairo till September 1914, when General Maxwell, commander of the occupier British army<sup>5</sup> expelled the diplomats and employees of the German and Austro-Hungarian consulates from Egypt. Only one consular officer remained in Cairo until he was arrested by the British army in December 1915.<sup>6</sup>

## Egyptian–Hungarian diplomatic relations between World War I and II

After the First World War, the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Hungary became independent as a result of the Treaty of "Trianon", suffering a terrible loss by losing two thirds of her territory and one third of the inhabitants. The new states around Hungary tried to isolate it with French help. After successful consolidation of the state and

<sup>2</sup> Rudolf Agstner: Von k.k. Konsularagentie... 21–27. Quoted by Komár Krisztián: *Relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Egypt 1882–1914*. PhD Faculty of Arts, University of Szeged, Szeged, 2006. 70.

<sup>3</sup> HHStA, AR. F8. Staaten. Cairo, 1891. June 1. Nr. XXVIII/B/adm. Heidler. In: Komár, 71.

<sup>4</sup> HHStA, AR. F8. ad. Nr. 901. Alexandria, 1882. June 3. Suzzara alexandriai konzul Kossiek kairói főkonzulnak [Suzzara, the consul in Alexandria to Kossiek, the general consul in Cairo]. In: Komár, 72–74.

<sup>5</sup> General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell GCB, KCMG, CVO, DSO (1859–1929) was a British Army officer and colonial regent. Maxwell received a commission into the British Army in 1879. He served on the Western Front in the First World War until he was given command of the Army in Egypt, where he successfully held the Suez Canal against Turkish attack. In 1916 Maxwell was assigned to be General Officer Commanding-in-Chief for Northern Command at York. He was promoted in June 1919 to full general and retired in 1922.

<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Agstner: *Der Ballhausplatz und Nordafrika, Studien zur Präsenz von Österreich (-Ungarn) in Kairo, Kossier, Luxor, Tripolis und Bengasi*. Schriften des Österreichischen Kulturinstitutes Kairo Band II., Kairo, 1995. 7–8.

the completion of internal stability, Hungary began to build new foreign relations. So Hungary set up its first diplomatic relations with the Holy Chair.<sup>7</sup>

The plan to establish a Hungarian consulate in Egypt fitted into this framework. *Al-Ahram*, a daily Arabic-language newspaper wrote about this important matter in its political column on 10 January 1924.<sup>8</sup> Thanks to the facilities provided by the Egyptian side, the plan of establishing a Hungarian consulate in Egypt progressed rapidly, and as a consequence, in twenty days, on 1 February 1924 *Al-Ahram* reported that King of Egypt, Fouad received the credentials of the Hungarian General Consul Alfréd Menasce. It was the foundation of the first independent Hungarian General Consulate in Alexandria.<sup>9</sup>

The next important step was taken three years later. *Al-Ahram* on 29 October 1927 mentioned that the Hungarian Plenipotentiary Minister accredited to London had contacted the Egyptian Embassy in the British capital.<sup>10</sup> The newspaper wrote that the Hungarian side intended to establish an embassy<sup>11</sup> in Cairo in order to protect the Hungarian interests and for the development and strengthening of the cooperation between the two countries. In response to the initiative, the Egyptian Office in London sent the Hungarian message to the Egyptian government.<sup>12</sup> A year later, *Al-Ahram* cited reports from Budapest that the Hungarian government agreed to establish a Hungarian Embassy in Cairo, and Félix Parcher will be the first Plenipotentiary Minister of Hungary in Cairo and he will take over the affairs of the embassy from the city of Bern, Switzerland.<sup>13</sup> On 20 February 1928 King Fouad met the first Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary in the royal palace, who in turn handed over his credentials to his Majesty. The Plenipotentiary Minister discussed the bilateral relations and international problems with the king.<sup>14</sup>

The day after presenting his credentials to the Egyptian King, *Al-Ahram* published an interview with the first Hungarian Plenipotentiary Minister in Cairo, Mr. Félix Parcher on 20 February 1928 on page five. According to the journalist, the Hungarian diplomat was very friendly and met him with pleasure. He was fluent in Arabic and he read *Al-Ahram* daily in order to enrich his Arabic knowledge. He spoke of the Egyptian newspaper with a high esteem, as it was characterized by a balanced picture and it had a leading role in the Arabic world. His Excellency, the Minister Plenipotentiary of Hungary, said that in May 1900, after his graduation, he worked as an attaché in the Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Alexandria and then in Cairo. The journalist emphasized that the Hungarian Minister

<sup>7</sup> Zombori István: *Diplomatic Relations between Hungary and the Holy Chair 1920–2000*. Szent István Társulat és Magyar Egyháztörténeti Enciklopédia Munkaközösség (METEM), Budapest, 2001. 7.

<sup>8</sup> “Hungarian Consulate-General in Egypt.” *Al-Ahram* 1924/–, 04.

<sup>9</sup> “The Foreign Consulates.” *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> From 1927 to October 3, 1928 Szizosztrisz Szidárúsz Bey was the Egyptian Minister Plenipotentiary in London, and on October 4, 1928 was followed by Abdel-Malek Hamza Bey.

<sup>11</sup> The article of *Al-Ahram* wrote that the Hungarian government wanted to establish a consulate in Egypt. This information was incorrect. The journalist made a mistake, instead of writing embassy, he wrote a consulate.

<sup>12</sup> “Hungarian Consulate in Cairo.” *Al-Ahram* 1927/–, 04.

<sup>13</sup> “Establishment of the Hungarian Embassy in Egypt.” *Ibid.* 1928/–, 02.

<sup>14</sup> Abdin Royal Palace Archive, Cairo, February 20, 1928. Archival Document about the event when King Fouad met the first Hungarian Ambassador in the royal palace, and who in turn handed over his credentials to the His Majesty.

Plenipotentiary was affected by Egypt. The diplomat assured that the priority in his diplomatic activity was to strengthen the Egyptian-Hungarian economic and commercial relations. He strove to finalize the talks, which were started by Alfréd Menasce, the Hungarian General Honorary Consul in Alexandria about the commercial agreement between the two countries.<sup>15</sup>

*Al-Ahram* had published in its issue dated on 28 February 1928 the meeting of the new Hungarian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary during his presentation to the credentials to the Majesty King. The Hungarian diplomat said: "Your Majesty! It gives me the honor to present to you the credentials, which were accredited to me by the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary to make me the Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to your Majesty. Would Your Majesty let me be the spokesman for the Hungarian regent: Our regent is expressing his great appreciation and affection to your majesty and is wishing happiness, welfare, and progress to Your Majesty, your family, and your people! Your Majesty, allow me to add my great respects. I hope Your Majesty will find it worth to take interest in my efforts to carry out my mission and complete the task we begin today. The purpose of my mission is to consolidate and strengthen friendly relations and promote understanding between the two kingdoms."

After the last talk, and presentation of credentials, the response of the King but was the following: "Excellency! It gives me pleasure to accept your credentials in this official concert, by which the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary accredited you as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. It is the first time that the Kingdom of Hungary has its representative in my country, which is a great pleasure for me. I expect from the establishment of this representation that it will have a great impact on strengthening friendly relations and bilateral cooperation and on promoting understanding between the two kingdoms, which will produce more benefits. The Hungarian regent's emotions expressed to me, to my family, and to my country have had the most beautiful effect on me. So accept my sincere thanks give them to his Majesty the Hungarian regent with my hopes for the happiness and prosperity of the Kingdom of Hungary. Thank you for the efforts you will take to complete your mission. I assure you that you can depend on my support and my government's help."<sup>16</sup>

Félix Parcher performed his duties as an Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister in Cairo from the Swiss capital, Bern; he came to Cairo every year staying for two months. *Al-Ahram* published the news on 24 January, 1929 that Hafiz Afifi Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, invited Parcher to a banquet before his departure to Switzerland. Tawfiq Nasim Pasha<sup>17</sup> and a large group of foreign diplomats appeared at the dinner.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Fatah-Allah, Mahmoud: "Quarter with the New Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary." *Al-Ahram* 1928/-, 05.

<sup>16</sup> "Between Egypt and Hungary." *Al-Ahram* 1928/-, 04.

<sup>17</sup> He was considered one of the most important leaders of the National Democratic Party, and was a prime minister several times. He was the best-known political personality in Hungary in the first half of the twentieth century.

<sup>18</sup> "The Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary." *Al-Ahram* 1929/-, 04.



Félix Parcher died in 1933 and Dr. Pál Förstner was appointed in his position as temporary chargé d'affaires, who led the Hungarian Embassy in Cairo from Budapest.<sup>19</sup> He had succeeded in signing a trade agreement with the Egyptian side, under which Egyptian cotton was exported to Hungary in exchange for agricultural machines to Egypt.<sup>20</sup>

In 1937 Lajos Rudnay became chargé d'affaires.<sup>21</sup> On 22 December, 1937, *Al-Ahram* published a large photo on its front page and stated that the previous day Lajos Rudnay, the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister of Hungary had given his credentials to the king of Egypt.<sup>22</sup>

The head of the embassy moved to Cairo in 1939, and from that time on the ambassador worked in Cairo.<sup>23</sup> Andor Semsey arrived in Cairo as chargé d'affaires,<sup>24</sup> who was from an aristocratic family. Semsey was very fond of hunting, it was his real hobby. He had repeatedly said that he preferred to retire or give up his post in Egypt because he could not practice his favorite hobby there.<sup>25</sup> *Al-Ahram* reported on 22 February 1939 that Semsey had given his credentials to the Egyptian King in Abdin Palace. After the meeting Mr. Ismail Taimour said farewell and good-bye to Semsey. On the first page of the *Al-Ahram* a photo of the Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary with Ismail Taimour can be seen.<sup>26</sup> The Hungarian Kingdom had his first Embassy in Cairo in the entire African continent, and had continued its work until mid-1941. In April 1941, the Hungarian Plenipotentiary Minister was called back to Budapest.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Rezk, Yunan Labib: *The Egyptian Foreign Ministry 1826–1937*. Al-Haia' Al-Masria Al-Amma Lel-Ketab, Al-Qahira, 1989. 135.

<sup>20</sup> F.O. 407/219 (I) Enc. In No. 49. Annual Report on Heads of Foreign Missions. In: Shakerr, Safaa: *Egyptian Foreign Ministry 1937–1953*. Matbaett Dar Al-Kotobb Aal-Wathaekk Al-Kawmia, Al-Qahira, 2006. 43.

<sup>21</sup> F.O. 407/223 (II) Enc. In No. 34. Annual Report on Heads of Foreign Missions. In: *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> "The Greek and the Hungarian Ministers Plenipotentiary give their credentials to the King." *Al-Ahram* 1937/19136, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>23</sup> Nagy, Ferenc: *Külügyminisztérium Levéltára (1918–1945)* [The Archives of the Foreign Ministry]. II. kötet. Külügyminisztérium, Utazás- és Ütlevéllügyi Osztály, Külképviseletek, Egyéb Szervek, Irathagyatékok Repertórium. Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, 2007. 103.

<sup>24</sup> From Second Counsellor, he got the First Secretary title, chargé d'affaires.

<sup>25</sup> Shakerr, 43.

<sup>26</sup> "The Hungarian Minister Plenipotentiary at Abdin Palace." *Al-Ahram* 1939/19556, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>27</sup> Sáringer, János: *Documentation à l'histoire de la diplomatie hongroise de 1920 à 1944*. Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, Szeged, 2005. 98.

### Heads of the Hungarian Kingdom's Mission

Félix Parcher (1928. 02. 10 – 1931. 12. 01); he carried out the embassy's tasks from Bern.

Félix Parcher (1931. 12. 01 – 1933. 02. 01); he managed it from Budapest.

Pál Förstner chargé d'affaires (1933. 02. 01 – 1937. 10. 23); he stayed in Cairo.

Lajos Rudnay (1937. 10. 23 – 1939. 01. 14); he managed it from Athens.

Andor Semsey chargé d'affaires (1939. 01. 14 – 1940. 04); he stayed in Cairo.

László Mára chargé d'affaires (1940. 04 – 1941. 04. 07).<sup>28</sup>

Country	City	Number	Nature or Type	Leader	Year
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate General	Alfréd Menasce	1924
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate General	Alfréd Menasce	1925
Egypt	Cairo	1	Honorary Consulate	Moussa Green	1925
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1925
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate General	Alfréd Menasce	1927
Egypt	Cairo	1	Honorary Consulate	Moussa Green	1927
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1927
Egypt	Cairo	1	Honorary Consulate	Moussa Green	1928
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1928
Egypt	Cairo	1	Honorary Consulate	Moussa Green	1929
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1929
Egypt	Cairo	2	Honorary Consulate General	Moussa Green	1930
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1930
Egypt	Cairo	2	Honorary Consulate General	Moussa Green	1932
Egypt	Alexandria	1	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1932
Egypt	Cairo	1	Honorary Consulate	László Páthy	1933

<sup>28</sup> Sáringer, János: *Adattár a magyar külügyi szolgálat történetéhez* [Data Base for the Diplomatic History of Hungary] (1920–1944). Szekipress Kft., Budapest, 2004. 60.

			General	(Polnauer)	
Egypt	Alexandria	2	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1933
Egypt	Alexandria	3	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1934
Egypt	Cairo	1	Alexandrian Consulate Branch	László Menczer	1936
Egypt	Alexandria	3	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1936
Egypt	Cairo	1	Alexandrian Consulate General Branch	György Reichmann	1937
Egypt	Alexandria	3	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1937
Egypt	Cairo	1	Alexandrian Consulate Branch	György Reichmann	1938
Egypt	Alexandria	3	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1938
Egypt	Alexandria	3	Honorary Consulate General	László Páthy (Polnauer)	1941 <sup>29</sup>

In reciprocity the Egyptian government established an Embassy in Hungary. The Egyptian Plenipotentiary Minister arrived at Budapest. *Al-Ahram* wrote about him on 14 October 1938 quoting from the German news agency: “Mourad Sayed Ahmed Pasha, Plenipotentiary Minister of Egypt had given his credentials to Admiral Horthy, the Regent of Hungary”.<sup>30</sup>

### Miklós Horthy, the son of the regent of Hungary, visits to Egypt

The son of the regent of Hungary, Junior Miklós Horthy’s visit in Egypt had primary importance among the visits of Hungarian politicians and elite in Egypt. On 15 April 1932 the English-speaking *Egyptian Mail* newspaper reported that Horthy had arrived on the ship “Ausonia” to the port of Alexandria as the head of a high-level delegation. The newspaper indicated: “Mr. Horthy is traveling strictly incognito”.<sup>31</sup> On 21 April Horthy visited the Pyramids and the Sphinx in Giza accompanied by Alajos De Paikert the first Hungarian director of Fouad I Agricultural Museum of Cairo and by Mr. Burghoffer. The report

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 95–177.

<sup>30</sup> “The Egyptian Minister Plenipotentiary in Budapest.” *Al-Ahram* 1938/–, 08. The Egyptian accredited Ministers Plenipotentiary to Budapest were: from Austria Ahmed El Kadry bey (1936. 11. 17 – 1938); Ahmed Mourad Sid pasa (1938. 10. 12 – 1940); Mohamed Soliman El Hout bey chargé d’affaires (1940); Abdel Kerim Safvat chargé d’affaires (1940. 04. 13 – 1942). From 1943 the embassy was directed from Switzerland. Sáringer: *Adattár*... 60.

<sup>31</sup> “Hungarian Regent’s Son in Alexandria.” *Egyptian Mail* 1932/6005, 03.

appeared on the first page of the newspaper with a large photo of the guests.<sup>32</sup> On 25 April *Al-Ahram* published a long article on the son of the regent of the Hungarian Kingdom. The newspaper reported: "In spite of the young age of the son of the Hungarian regent, Mr. Miklós Horthy is the director of the Hungarian English Bank and works in business. While staying in Egypt he took the opportunity to negotiate with the experts of the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Credit Bank to do business between Egypt and Hungary." The guest suggested that Hungary should buy a significant quantity of cotton from the Egyptian government and Hungary should pay for it by building factories, rice stores, and exporting fertilizers to the Egyptian side. The Hungarian guest visited the Ministry of Finance and Agriculture several times to discuss the matter accompanied by László Polnauer, the Hungarian General Consul in Alexandria, and by the famous trader Landman.<sup>33</sup>

On 14 February 1934 *Al-Ahram* carried the news that Horthy junior left Rome for Alexandria on the ship "Calitia".<sup>34</sup> After three days, he arrived at the port of Alexandria, where he was greeted by László Polnauer, the Hungarian Honorary General Consul. The Hungarian politicians appeared in a large photo on the first page of *Al-Ahram*, the most popular the Arabic newspaper, which reflected the importance of the visit of the honored guest.<sup>35</sup>

On 25 February 1938 *Al-Ahram* indicated that Miklós Horthy had stayed in Egypt for a few weeks, and that on 24 February 1938 he left for Europe. He was accompanied to the port of Alexandria by László Polnauer, the Hungarian Honorary General Consul in Alexandria and by some illustrious members of the Hungarian community in Egypt.<sup>36</sup>

On 8 February 1939 *Al-Ahram* said that Miklós Horthy junior arrived at Alexandria a day before and was accompanied by the sister of Princess Károly. Mr. László Polnauer, the Hungarian Honorary General Consul in Alexandria received them. They were to travel to Cairo the next day. *Al-Ahram* published a large photo about Horthy and the Hungarian Honorary General Consul on the front page.<sup>37</sup> On 11 February the newspaper mentioned that Ahmed Maher Pasha, the Egyptian Minister of Finance met Miklós Horthy junior in his office, where they discussed economic and commercial bilateral cooperation.<sup>38</sup> On 30 April *Al-Ahram* indicated that the Hungarian regent's son and the sister of Károly travelled from Alexandria toward Hungary after a visit lasting for several weeks.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Hungarian Regent's son at the pyramids." *Egyptian Mail* 1932/6009, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>33</sup> "Commercial Deals between Egypt and Hungary – Miklós Horthy's efforts." *Al-Ahram* 1932/-, 06.

<sup>34</sup> "Hungarian Regent's Son is coming towards Egypt." *Al-Ahram* 1934/-, 04.

<sup>35</sup> "Horthy arrives in Alexandria, and the Hungarian General Honorary Consul receives him." *Al-Ahram* 1934/17671. 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>36</sup> "Hungarian Regent's Son." *Al-Ahram* 1938/-, 09.

<sup>37</sup> "Hungarian Regent's Son." *Al-Ahram* 1939/19542. 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>38</sup> "Miklós Horthy met the Minister of Finance." *Al-Ahram* 1939/-, 08.

<sup>39</sup> "Hungarian Regent's Daughter." *Al-Ahram* 1939/19622, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

### Sedky Pasha, the Egyptian Prime Minister's visit to Budapest

On 2 February 1932 the Egyptian authorities declared that the Hungarian government had the honor to invite the Prime Minister of Egypt to visit the Budapest officially, in order to discuss bilateral relations between the two countries.<sup>40</sup> On 26 February *Al-Ahram* reported the following news: "The Consul of Hungary met the day before yesterday Ismail Sedky Pasha and informed him that the Hungarian government bestowed him with the greatest scarf of merit, the highest medal of Hungary and only the Prime Minister of Italy received it before from the leaders of governments."<sup>41</sup>

On 29 August 1932 *Al-Ahram* reported in its political column that Sedky Pasha, the prime minister had traveled yesterday morning to Geneva, heading to the Hungarian capital Budapest, and this is the first visit of an Egyptian Prime Minister to Hungary after the First World War.<sup>42</sup> The newspapers in Rome described the visit in detail. The reception of the Egyptian officials was favorable, the visit can be regarded as very successful.<sup>43</sup> In honor of the Prime Minister and his delegation Miklós Horthy, the regent of Hungary had made a dinner gala, and after the dinner, the Egyptian Prime Minister told reporters that the goal of the talks with the Hungarian officials was to strengthen the economic and commercial relations between the two countries and added that Egypt should export cotton to Hungary and the Egyptians would import industrial products from Hungary.<sup>44</sup>

The relations between Egypt and Hungary were cut off during the Second World War. In February 1942 Egypt had declared its position of neutrality as a result of the British pressure on it and supported the British, at the same time Hungary stood with the Germans.

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<sup>40</sup> Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Archive, Cairo, 0075-050593, February 02, 1932. The Hungarian government invites the Prime Minister of Egypt to visit the Hungarian capital.

<sup>41</sup> "The Hungarian government bestowed the prime minister with the greatest scarf of merit." *Al-Ahram* 1932/-, 06.

<sup>42</sup> "Sedky Pasha in the Hungarian Capital." *Al-Ahram* 1932/-, 04.

<sup>43</sup> "Ismail Sedky Pasha's Visit to Hungary." *Al-Ahram* 1932/-, 02.

<sup>44</sup> "Sedky Pasha in the Hungarian Capital." *Al-Ahram* 1932/-, 06.



## *Il P.S.I. (riformista) e la politica coloniale del fascismo in uno scritto di Angelo Tasca del 1939*

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Quasi tre mesi prima dello scoppio della II<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale, il quotidiano del P.S.I. riformista pubblicato in esilio a Parigi, "Il Nuovo Avanti", pubblicava uno studio di Angelo Tasca sulla politica coloniale dell'Italia fascista<sup>1</sup>.

Lo scritto inizia con una considerazione preliminare di metodo, che può essere ampiamente condivisa: l'A. infatti afferma che, senza tener conto degli *alti* e dei *bassi* della politica estera italiana, anche *pre-fascista*, non è possibile fare un serio studio sul colonialismo italiano e sulle sue linee direttrici, di ieri e di oggi: proprio perciò afferma che, per molti aspetti, è improponibile parlare di una vera e propria *politica coloniale italiana*, mentre invece un termine più appropriato per definirla sarebbe quello di *politica imperiale*.<sup>2</sup>

Fatta tale premessa, l'A. analizza quanto accaduto in Libia dove, dopo la conquista del 1911-'12<sup>3</sup>, la situazione era estremamente peggiorata durante la I<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale, quando il dominio italiano si era ridotto alla sola zona costiera del paese<sup>4</sup>.

L'A. si occupa poi dello *Statuto* concesso alla Libia dallo Stato Liberale Italiano il 1<sup>o</sup> giugno 1919 – frutto di accordi fra Roma e i capi arabi – che, mai integralmente applicato, preparò il terreno alla successiva rivolta libica: e, in tal senso, l'A. nota anche che la

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<sup>1</sup> Che si tratti di uno studio sul problema – e non certo di un normale articolo di più che giustificata propaganda antifascista – è confermato non solo dalla *Nota della redazione* finale ma anche dalle note allo scritto stesso, che fanno riferimento ai più interessanti contributi sull'espansione coloniale italiana apparsi prima e durante il fascismo. Cfr. *Nota della redazione* a Angelo Tasca, *La politica coloniale dell'Italia fascista*, in "Il Nuovo Avanti", 1/VII/1939. Sul suo autore, che fu tra i fondatori del P.C.d'I. nel 1921 e poi se ne distaccò nel 1929 per contrasti con la direzione del Partito, Stalin e il Komintern per tornare al P.S.I. (riformista) e collaborare anche, in Francia, al quotidiano della S.F.I.O., "Le Populaire", e poi finire per far parte del regime di Vichy, cfr. Angelo Tasca, [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo\\_Tasca](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Tasca) (14/XII/2009), p. 2. Ma cfr. anche – e soprattutto – Alexander J. De Grand, *Angelo Tasca. Un politico scomodo*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1985.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. A. Tasca, *La politica coloniale dell'Italia fascista*, cit. Nella premessa viene fatto il nome di un uomo politico che rappresenta fin troppo bene una certa *continuità storica* in politica estera tra il *pre-fascismo* e il regime fascista. Su di lui cfr. *Tittoni, Tommaso*, in *Indice biografico* annesso a Giuseppe Bottai, *Diario 1935-1944*, a cura di Giordano Bruno Guerri, Milano, Rizzoli, 1994, p. 600.

<sup>3</sup> Su questo avvenimento cfr. Paolo Maltese, *La terra promessa. La guerra italo-turca e la conquista della Libia 1911-1912*, Milano, Mondadori, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. *La politica coloniale italiana in Libia fino alla sconfitta dei Senussi*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sulla precaria situazione dell'Italia in Libia durante la I<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale cfr. P. Maltese, *La terra promessa*, cit., pp. 360-363. Ma cfr. anche Alberto Rosselli, *Le operazioni militari in Libia e nel Sahara 1914-1918*, in "Storia & Battaglie", 16, 2002, pp. 2-7.

*politica della forza* decisa dal governo presieduto da Luigi Facta – ultimo ministro italiano *pre-fascista* – fu poi sviluppata e concretamente applicata dal fascismo<sup>5</sup>.

Stabilita questa *linea di continuità* fra la politica seguita dall'Italia liberale in Libia e quella del fascismo, l'A. fa notare che, non appena giunto Mussolini al potere, l'Italia passa all'offensiva nel paese con la precisa intenzione di riconquistarlo del tutto e che, già nel 1923, lo *Statuto* del 1919 viene abolito<sup>6</sup>.

A ciò segue – come del resto era logico, prevedibile ed altrettanto inevitabile – una ricostruzione delle operazioni militari per la totale riconquista della Libia che, dopo aver raggiunto il loro culmine nel 1927-'28, si concluderanno nel 1931 con la completa vittoria italiana. Qui però l'A. non si limita ad un resoconto *neutro* delle vicende militari ma denuncia lo spietato massacro della popolazione civile libica, sterminata direttamente ma anche indirettamente dopo essere stata rinchiusa in campi di concentramento in mezzo al deserto con poco cibo ed acqua e quasi inesistenti cure mediche. In tal senso, l'A. non trascura di delineare il ruolo avuto in tutto ciò dal generale Rodolfo Graziani, come anche quello da lui svolto nella cattura, nel processo-farsa e nella morte dell'ultimo capo della resistenza libica anti-italiana, Omar al Mukhtar<sup>7</sup>.

Subito dopo, l'A. si sofferma su un altro capitolo della politica coloniale fascista: quello dell'Africa Orientale Italiana, con particolare riferimento all'Etiopia<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. *La politica coloniale italiana in Libia fino alla sconfitta dei Senussi*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sullo *Statuto* concesso dall'Italia alla Libia il 1° giugno 1919 cfr. P. Maltese, op. cit., p. 363. Ma cfr. anche Habib Wadaa Al Hesnawi, *Note sulla politica coloniale italiana verso gli arabi libici (1911-1943)*, in AA. VV., *La guerre coloniale del fascismo*, a cura di Angelo Del Boca, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1991, p. 40. Sull'ultimo Presidente del Consiglio italiano *pre-fascista* cfr. Danilo Veneruso, *Facta, Luigi*, in AA. VV., *Dizionario del fascismo*, I: A-K, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, pp. 499-500.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. *La politica coloniale italiana in Libia fino alla sconfitta dei Senussi*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.. Sulla ripresa dell'offensiva italiana in Libia e la denuncia dello *Statuto* del 1919 cfr. P. Maltese, op. cit., p. 363; H. Wadaa Al Hesnawi, *Nota sulla politica coloniale italiana verso gli arabi libici (1911-1943)*, in AA. VV., op. cit., pp. 42-44. Ma cfr. inoltre Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia. Dal fascismo a Gheddafi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1991, pp. 5-8.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. *La politica coloniale italiana in Libia fino alla sconfitta dei Senussi*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sulle operazioni militari italiane per la totale riconquista della Libia cfr. P. Maltese, *La terra promessa*, cit., pp. 363-366; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., pp. 9-232; H. Wadaa Al Hesnawi, *Nota sulla politica coloniale italiana...*, in AA. VV., op. cit., pp. 45-47. Sul ruolo di Rodolfo Graziani in queste operazioni cfr. Romano Canosa, *Graziani. Il maresciallo d'Italia dalla guerra d'Etiopia alla Repubblica di Salò*, Milano, Mondadori, 2005, pp. 10-74. Sulle circostanze dell'uccisione dell'ultimo capo della resistenza libica anti-italiana cfr. P. Maltese, *La terra promessa*, cit., p. 366; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., pp. 197-208; H. Wadaa Al Hesnawi, *Nota sulla politica coloniale italiana...*, cit., p. 46; R. Canosa, *Graziani*, cit., pp. 73-74: tutti gli autori concordano sul fatto che l'impiccagione di Omar al Mukhtar non fu una pagina molto gloriosa né per l'esercito italiano né per il suo comandante, generale Rodolfo Graziani. Su di lui cfr. Nicola Labanca, *Graziani, Rodolfo*, in AA. VV., *Dizionario del fascismo*, I, cit., pp. 633-635. Sulla conduzione delle operazioni militari in Libia cfr. Giorgio Rochat-Giulio Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano dal 1861 al 1943*, Torino, Einaudi, 1978, pp. 243-247; Giorgio Rochat, *Le guerre coloniali dell'Italia fascista*, in AA. VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 176-182. Ma cfr. inoltre Denis Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, Milano, Mondadori 1993, pp. 44-50; Giorgio Rochat, *Le guerre italiane (1935-1943). Dall'Impero d'Etiopia alla disfatta*, Torino, Einaudi, 2008, pp. 5-11.

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.



In questo caso, l'inizio del rinnovato interesse dell'Italia per l'Etiopia (come è noto, l'Eritrea e la Somalia erano già colonie italiane fin dall'epoca *pre-fascista*) è posto in diretta correlazione con la fine delle operazioni militari in Libia: infatti, l'A. afferma che solo nel 1932 l'Italia inizia ad interessarsi di nuovo da vicino all'Abissinia<sup>9</sup>.

Dopo tale premessa, lo studio non si sofferma sull'andamento della guerra in Etiopia<sup>10</sup>, quanto piuttosto ne individua le motivazioni strategiche, *imperiali*, che in definitiva sono le stesse che portarono l'Italia *pre-fascista* al primo tentativo di conquista del paese ed alla successiva sconfitta di Adua (1896)<sup>11</sup>: e ciò porta inevitabilmente a pensare che, in materia coloniale, la *Nuova Italia* di Mussolini non si differenzi molto da quella che l'ha preceduta.

Ma tutto ciò serve solo come base per parlare del *dopo-conquista* dell'Etiopia, e in particolare della colonizzazione, che non ha dato i frutti sperati, non solo per le difficoltà di adattamento dei coloni italiani al clima etiopico ma anche per la resistenza opposta dagli abissini<sup>12</sup>. E non è un caso che qui l'A. parli in parallelo di tali due aspetti dell'occupazione

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. In effetti, è solo nel dicembre del 1932 che Mussolini chiede al generale Emilio De Bono di preparare un piano d'azione contro l'Etiopia. Sulla circostanza cfr. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, II: *La conquista dell'Impero*, Milano, Mondadori, 1992, pp. 156-159, pp. 168-178 e pp. 224-225. L'A. si sofferma poi (*ivi*, pp. 226-231) sui contrasti *inter-fascisti* su tale piano e, soprattutto, sulla direzione delle operazioni militari prima ancora che esse siano iniziate. Ma, sullo stesso tema, cfr. anche Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, IX: *Il fascismo e le sue guerre*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1995, pp. 337-338; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce. Gli anni del consenso (1929-1936)*, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, pp. 603-605; Enzo Collotti (con la collaborazione di Nicola Labanca e Teodoro Sala), *Fascismo e politica di potenza. Politica estera 1922-1939*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 2000, pp. 254-255. Ma cfr. anche G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane*, cit., pp. 15-20. Sull'autore del piano contro l'Etiopia del 1932 cfr. Frank M. Snowden, *De Bono, Emilio*, in AA.VV., *Dizionario del fascismo*, I, cit., pp. 394-397. Sul sostituto di De Bono alla guida del fronte anti-etiope dell'Eritrea – ignorato nell'articolo di Angelo Tasca – cfr. Nicola Labanca, *Badoglio, Pietro*, in AA.VV., *Dizionario del fascismo*, I, cit., pp. 129-132.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sulle operazioni militari in Etiopia cfr. G. Rochat-G. Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano...*, cit., pp. 247-252; G. Rochat, *Le guerre coloniali dell'Italia fascista*, in AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 182-186; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, II, cit., pp. 389-706; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 73-99; G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane*, cit., pp. 48-74. Sul ruolo avuto in tali operazioni dal generale Rodolfo Graziani cfr. R. Canosa, *Graziani*, cit., pp. 82-128.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sul precedente tentativo italiano di conquista dell'Etiopia cfr. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, I, 1: *Dall'Unità alla Marcia su Roma*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1985. Sulla sconfitta di Adua cfr. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, I, 2: *Dall'Unità alla Marcia su Roma*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1985, pp. 597-718. Sulle circostanze che portarono alla sconfitta di Adua cfr. Nicola Labanca, *In marcia verso Adua*, Torino, Einaudi, 1993. Sulle operazioni militari italiane in questo periodo cfr. G. Rochat-G. Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano...*, cit., pp. 115-118 e pp. 135-138. Sulla continuità in materia coloniale fra Stato liberale e fascismo cfr. Guido Quazza, *Continuità e rotture nella politica coloniale da Mancini a Mussolini*, in AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 5-30.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sulle difficoltà incontrate dai coloni italiani in Etiopia cfr. Angelo Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III: *La caduta dell'Impero*, Milano, Mondadori, 1993, pp. 137-217. Ma cfr. anche D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 131-136. Sulla resistenza etiopica all'occupazione italiana cfr. Richard Pankhurst, *Come il popolo etiopico resistette all'occupazione e alla repressione da parte dell'Italia fascista*, in AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 256-287; Zaudef Hailemariam, *La vera data d'inizio della*

italiana dell'Etiopia: infatti il giornale che pubblica il suo studio, il "Nuovo Avanti", ha seguito le vicende dell'impero coloniale italiano in Abissinia fin dal maggio 1936 e continuerà a farlo fino al maggio 1940<sup>13</sup>. In tale contesto, quindi, è altrettanto non casuale che l'A. parli anche del punto culminante della repressione compiuta dagli italiani contro gli etiopici, scatenatasi ancora più duramente dopo l'attentato ad Addis Abeba del 19 febbraio 1937 contro Rodolfo Graziani, Maresciallo d'Italia e Vicere d'Etiopia, che causò inutili massacri tra la popolazione civile abissina<sup>14</sup>: e su tale *pagina nera* si chiude il bilancio, sostanzialmente fallimentare, della colonizzazione italiana dell'Etiopia come poi, non molto più tardi, finirà per ammettere lo stesso fascismo<sup>15</sup>.

A questo punto, non poteva mancare la trattazione di un argomento che era insito nei due precedenti: la legislazione razziale<sup>16</sup>. L'A. parte da una constatazione di base: se l'Africa Orientale Italiana deve essere una *seconda Italia*, la popolazione indigena conta solo come mezzo da utilizzare oppure come un ostacolo da spezzare, e proprio da ciò derivano i primi provvedimenti sull'organizzazione dell'A.O.I. del giugno 1936<sup>17</sup>.

Stabilita questa premessa, si parla poi dei provvedimenti concreti in materia razziale, a cominciare da quelli annunciati, fin dall'inizio del 1937, dall'allora Ministro delle Colonie, Alessandro Lessona, per impedire l'unione di italiani *con esseri inferiori*, che avrebbe compromesso le migliori qualità della stirpe italiana come *razza dominante*: ad

*seconda guerra mondiale, ibidem*, pp. 288-313; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III, cit., pp. 5-76; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 94-96; G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane*, cit., pp. 84-88. Sulle operazioni militari di contro-guerriglia in Etiopia cfr. G. Rochat-G. Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano ...*, cit., pp. 253-255.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. "Il Nuovo Avanti", 10/V/1936-1/V/1940.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. *L'Africa Orientale Italiana*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sull'attentato a Rodolfo Graziani e sui massacri della popolazione civile etiopica, culminati in quello del monastero di Debra Libanós – in cui, tra il 21 e il 27 maggio 1937, furono fucilate 426 persone – cfr. Giorgio Rochat, *L'attentato a Graziani e la repressione italiana in Etiopia nel 1936-37*, in "Italia Contemporanea", 118, 1975, pp. 3-38. Ma cfr. anche G. Rochat, *Le guerre coloniali dell'Italia fascista*, in AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., p. 189; R. Pankhurst, *Come il popolo etiopico resistette...*, *ibidem*, pp. 263-266; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III, cit., pp. 77-88.; R. Canosa, *Graziani*, cit., pp. 153-160. Sul massacro di Debra Libanós cfr. G. Rochat, *L'attentato a Graziani...*, cit., pp. 36-37; R. Pankhurst, *Come il popolo etiopico resistette...*, cit., p. 266; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III, cit., pp. 88-106; R. Canosa, *Graziani*, cit., pp. 161-169. Ma cfr. inoltre Angelo Del Boca, *Debra Libanós: una soluzione finale*, in Id., *Italiani brava gente? Un mito duro a morire*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2005, pp. 205-227. Su Rodolfo Graziani cfr. nota 7. Dell'attentato a Rodolfo Graziani si era occupato – a caldo ma molto lucidamente – anche il quotidiano del P.S.I. (riformista). Cfr. *Le bombe di Addis Abeba* (n.f.), in "Il Nuovo Avanti", 27/II/1937, in cui l'attentato al Vicere d'Etiopia veniva ricollegato alla più generale resistenza del popolo etiopico all'occupazione italiana.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. in tal senso *L'impero* (n.f.), in "Il Nuovo Avanti", 1/V/1940, in cui si fa riferimento ad un discorso tenuto dal Ministro delle Colonie alla Camera dei Fasci e delle Corporazioni, in cui si afferma che lo Stato italiano affida all'iniziativa privata la colonizzazione dell'Etiopia: il che significa ammettere, pur senza dirlo apertamente, che il fascismo ha completamente fallito nell'attuazione di tale compito in prima persona.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. *La legislazione razziale*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

esempio, il decreto-legge 839 del 19 aprile 1937, che prevede la prigione da 1 a 5 anni per chi abbia *relazioni coniugali con un soggetto dell'Africa Orientale*<sup>18</sup>.

Si nota poi però che la legislazione razziale vera e propria in tutte le colonie italiane ha un suo primo importante sviluppo nel 1938. Infatti, una seduta del 6 ottobre di quell'anno, il Gran Consiglio del fascismo riconferma l'importanza di varare una serie di provvedimenti legislativi in materia di razza per le colonie italiane in cui, tra l'altro, si riconferma il precedente divieto di matrimoni fra italiani ed *elementi appartenenti alla razza camita, semita e altre razze non ariane*<sup>19</sup>.

Ma – si nota in seguito – le prime misure davvero organiche in materia sono prese con il progetto di legge del 16 marzo 1939 nel quale, fra l'altro, gli italiani sono ormai visti non più come tali ma come appartenenti ad una *razza superiore*. E, proprio per tale motivo, tra i delitti nocivi al prestigio di quest'ultima, ci sono *il matrimonio e la vita comune con nativi, la frequentazione di locali riservati agli indigeni*, nonché una serie di reati minori, come la *partecipazione con indigeni a delitti*<sup>20</sup>: quest'ultimo reato non depone poi certo a favore dell'intelligenza del legislatore che lo ha previsto, poiché è un'assurdità giuridica definire un delitto più grave solo perché viene compiuto assieme ad un *membro di una razza inferiore*; senza contare, poi, che la pena da scontare in tal caso viene ancor più inasprita se il reato è stato ispirato dalla *pressione di indigeni*<sup>21</sup>.

Al di là delle considerazioni che si possono fare sull'insieme di tali norme, che presuppongono una notevole *idiozia coloniale* nei loro estensori, che a sua volta deriva da una completa impreparazione in materia nonché alla completa ignoranza della situazione *in loco*, l'A. conclude la sua ricostruzione del problema con un accenno alla discussione sul progetto di legge che si è avuta nel maggio 1939 alla Commissione per l'Africa Italiana, da cui è uscito – almeno per quanto riguarda la situazione in Libia – un elemento che potrebbe apparire contraddittorio rispetto alla politica generale da seguire: infatti il Presidente della Commissione, il generale della Milizia Attilio Teruzzi, in risposta a che gli chiedeva in quale posizione si sarebbe venuto a trovare, nell'ambito dell'attuazione di una politica razziale coloniale organica, il *cittadino nativo della Libia*, che godeva di uno statuto speciale, affermava che costui aveva *una posizione più elevata in rapporto agli altri indigeni solo agli effetti giuridici* ma non a quelli razziali<sup>22</sup>. Una simile dichiarazione, oltre a riconfermare tutte le contraddizioni interne di una politica razziale coloniale varata da personalità ben poco preparate in materia, ne riaffermava tutta l'assurdità, particolarmente evidente nel caso libico – sul quale l'A. dello studio tornerà subito dopo –, in cui un provvedimento in apparenza più intelligente del solito viene poi immediatamente negato non appena è stato formulato<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sull'allora Ministro delle Colonie cfr. Lessona, Alessandro, in *Indice biografico* annesso a G. Bottai, *Diario 1935-1944*, cit., p. 571.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. *La legislazione razziale*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>23</sup> Sulla politica razziale del fascismo nelle colonie italiane in Africa cfr. Luigi Goglia, *Nota sul razzismo coloniale fascista*, in "Storia Contemporanea", 6, 1988, pp. 1223-1266. Sulla situazione di *apartheid*, non solo razziale, creata dall'Italia in Africa Orientale cfr. Angelo Del Boca, *I crimini del colonialismo fascista*, in AA. VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 246-248. Ma cfr. anche

Le ultime battute sull'argomento precedente introducono quello successivo, la colonizzazione della Libia<sup>24</sup> che, a sua volta, costituisce l'ideale continuazione di un tema prima trattato<sup>25</sup>.

Stavolta, infatti, la ricostruzione dei fatti prende le mosse dal *dopo-pacificazione* della Libia<sup>26</sup>, e più precisamente dal 1932, quando l'allora sotto-segretario alle Colonie, Alessandro Lessona, auspicò un grandissimo sforzo per la colonizzazione del territorio appena riconquistato a scopo *demografico, politico e militare*, di cui avrebbe dovuto farsi carico lo Stato<sup>27</sup>.

Non si può fare a meno di notare che, da questo insistente auspicio alla sua attuazione pratica passarono diversi anni anche perchè, nel frattempo, gran parte delle risorse dell'Italia erano state assorbite dall'impresa etiopica<sup>28</sup>, e che la svolta sulla Libia avvenne nel marzo 1938, quando il nuovo governatore della colonia, Italo Balbo, sottopose a Mussolini un piano di *colonizzazione intensa* con l'invio *in loco* di 20000 coloni, raggruppati in 1800 famiglie, che dovevano occupare 21 villaggi già preparati per loro in Cirenaica e in Tripolitania: il piano fu attuato con la partenza dei primi coloni il 28 ottobre 1938, sedicesimo anniversario della *Marcia su Roma*<sup>29</sup>.

In effetti, dal punto di vista del fascismo, la colonizzazione italiana in Libia attuata fino ad allora non aveva dato i risultati sperati: era infatti prevalsa una politica di grandi imprese agricole che però non assicuravano l'agiatezza a tutti i coloni<sup>30</sup>. Proprio per tale motivo si

A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III, cit., pp. 218-252; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 137-141. Ma, in particolare, sull'*apartheid* sessuale in Africa Orientale Italiana voluto dal fascismo cfr. Giulia Barrera, *Sessualità e segregazione nelle terre dell'Impero*, in AA.VV., *L'Impero fascista. Italia ed Etiopia (1935-1941)*, a cura di Riccardo Bottoni, Bologna, il Mulino, 2008, pp. 363-414. In materia di razzismo coloniale, lo studio di Angelo Tasca ignora il problema dei *Falascià*, gli ebrei etiopici che, in particolare dopo il 1938, furono sottoposti ad una duplice forma di razzismo. Sull'argomento – ancora oggi poco studiato – cfr. Francesco Del Canuto, *I Falascià fra politica antisemita e politica razziale*, in "Storia Contemporanea", 6, 1988, pp. 1267-1285. Sul Presidente della Commissione per l'Africa Italiana cfr. Teruzzi, *Attilio*, in *Indice biografico* annesso a G. Bottai, *Diario 1935-1944*, cit., p. 599. Sulla *cittadinanza italiana speciale* per gli arabi di Libia – sulla quale si tornerà fra poco – cfr. A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., p. 240; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., p. 143.

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. *La colonizzazione libica*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Cfr. *La politica coloniale italiana in Libia fino alla sconfitta dei senussi*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Sulla *pacificazione* della Libia cfr. nota 7.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. *La colonizzazione libica*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Si noterà qui che, almeno una delle motivazioni espresse da Lessona per la colonizzazione – e, quindi, per il massiccio invio nel territorio di coloni italiani – era legata alla vecchia fissazione del fascismo di porre fine all'emigrazione italiana verso paesi stranieri, motivo che poi sarà ripreso per l'Etiopia: a ciò si aggiungeva l'altra idea fissa del regime di vincere le guerre con l'incremento della popolazione. Su Alessandro Lessona cfr. nota 18.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sulle operazioni militari in Etiopia cfr. nota 10.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sui piani di Italo Balbo cfr. A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., pp. 256-291; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 141-143. Sul loro autore cfr. Gregory Alegi, *Balbo, Italo*, in AA. VV., *Dizionario del fascismo*, I, cit., pp. 132-135.

<sup>30</sup> Cfr. *La colonizzazione libica*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit. Sulla *prima ondata* della colonizzazione italiana in Libia cfr. A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., pp. 174-178; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre*

decise di varare una forma diversa di colonizzazione, economica e demografica al tempo stesso, che consentisse di fissare il più gran numero possibile di italiani sul territorio anche con la loro aggregazione in villaggi e di provvedere inoltre alla loro difesa militare<sup>31</sup>.

A questo punto, l'A. si preoccupa di smentire un tema fin troppo presente nella propaganda fascista: quello dell'esistenza, accanto a quella italiana, di una *colonizzazione araba*. In realtà, dietro questa formulazione propagandistica, si nascondono due misure rese inevitabili dall'estromissione – ed espropriazione<sup>32</sup> – degli agricoltori arabi. La prima di esse – che riguarda la Libia orientale – fissa solo una riserva di terre destinate al pascolo, all'unico scopo di *mettere da qualche parte* gli arabi costretti a sgombrare le alture del Gebel (Cirenaica) destinate ad essere occupate dai coloni italiani; la seconda consiste nella creazione di *villaggi arabi*, modellati su quelli creati per gli italiani. Ma – e l'A. non ha difficoltà a dirlo –, qui si tratta solo di offrire un alibi alla *colonizzazione intensa* delle terre libiche effettuata dall'Italia, poichè in questo caso si sono costruiti solo pochi villaggi, e per di più con limitate estensioni di terreno adiacenti: inoltre – come hanno confessato gli stessi fascisti – la misura non può avere larga applicazione<sup>33</sup>.

E se il fascismo può dunque vantarsi di aver fatto, con tutte queste misure, della Libia la *diciannovesima provincia italiana* – come era stato sancito dalla decisione del Gran Consiglio del fascismo del 26 ottobre 1938<sup>34</sup> –, non immagina – come, del resto, l'A. dello studio – che non molto tempo dopo, con lo scoppio della II<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale in cui poi verrà coinvolta, l'Italia finirà per perdere tutte le sue colonie, Libia compresa, e in quest'ultimo caso i primi a farne le spese saranno proprio i coloni da non molto insediati nel territorio libico<sup>35</sup>.

L'ultimo argomento trattato nello studio di Angelo Tasca sulla politica coloniale fascista è il ruolo di « protettore » dell'Islam assunto dal fascismo<sup>36</sup>.

Dopo aver premesso che il fascismo, nella sua letteratura, applica alla storia della politica coloniale le stesse regole valide per quella interna ed estera da lui condotte<sup>37</sup>, l'A. afferma che, in questi scritti, soprattutto sulla Libia, si può trovare senza ombra di smentita la riaffermazione della *volontà di potenza e di dominazione* del regime fascista, che quindi ha abolito la precedente prassi delle trattative con gli indigeni, considerata indegna e

del Duce, cit., p. 141. Ma cfr. inoltre Ali M. Dawi, *Alcuni aspetti giuridici della colonizzazione italiana della Libia*, in AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. 367-379.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. *La colonizzazione libica*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit., che non trascura di illustrare anche le forme di pagamento a riscatto delle terre concesse ai coloni dallo Stato, da completare entro 25 anni. Sull'insieme dei piani di Balbo per la Libia cfr. nota 29.

<sup>32</sup> Sull'espropriazione delle terre agli arabi di Libia effettuata dal fascismo cfr. nota 30.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sui piani di colonizzazione in Libia cfr. nota 29.

<sup>34</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Su questa decisione cfr. D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., p. 143.

<sup>35</sup> Sull'entrata dell'Italia nella II<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale, le operazioni militari e la perdita delle colonie cfr. G. Rochat – G. Massobrio, *Breve storia dell'esercito italiano...*, cit., pp. 270-280; A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale*, III, cit., pp. 386-532; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., pp. 251-314; G. Rochat, *Le guerre italiane*, cit., pp. 239-399.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. *Il « protettore » dell'Islam*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.: la virgolettatura sul termine *protettore* segnala fin dall'inizio il vero pensiero dell'A. su tale « protezione ».

<sup>37</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*.: prima, in epoca democratico-liberale, tutto era *sbagliato*; adesso, nell'*era fascista*, tutto va bene ed è *perfetto*. Evidentemente, anche in questo caso, il fascismo difetta di modestia.

appartenente ai *residui del passato*, per passare nei loro confronti ad una politica di *forza romana*<sup>38</sup>.

Da ciò deriva un fatto più che evidente: il fascismo non riconosce alcun diritto agli arabi, ma permette loro solo una collaborazione subordinata, poiché per lui il dominio e l'apporto degli indigeni alla realizzazione dei suoi progetti sono sinonimi. In altre parole – prosegue l'A. – la *Nuova Italia di Benito Mussolini* vuole servirsi dei musulmani come mezzo per le sue azioni, ma solo a condizione che si sottomettano senza condizioni alla volontà del padrone: solamente così il Duce può essere il « *protettore dell'Islam* », come lui stesso ha detto durante il suo viaggio in Libia nel marzo 1937<sup>39</sup>.

Svelata la vera natura della « *protezione* » benignamente accordata dal fascismo all'Islam, l'A. torna sul tema della *cittadinanza italiana speciale* per gli arabi della Libia<sup>40</sup>. Anche in tal caso, Angelo Tasca riporta la questione ai suoi termini reali, proprio perché vuole smitizzare tutto il clamore che su di essa ha fatto la propaganda fascista. In realtà, la *cittadinanza italiana speciale* per gli arabi della Libia è concessa *ad personam* dal governatore della colonia, che ha poteri assoluti in materia. Inoltre, tale concessione è valida solo in Libia e negli altri territori italiani dell'Africa e, pur se posseduta, non dà agli arabi alcun diritto di esercitare cariche di comando su *cittadini italiani metropolitani*. A ciò va aggiunto il fatto che tale *cittadinanza speciale*, anche se permette il mantenimento dello statuto personale ai cittadini musulmani, non consente loro di chiedere la cittadinanza italiana. Quindi, il provvedimento tanto esaltato dalla propaganda fascista come tale da concedere a tutti i libici poteri più estesi, in realtà innalza una barriera insormontabile fra loro ed i veri cittadini italiani, come del resto aveva già esplicitamente detto la Commissione per l'Africa Italiana<sup>41</sup>. Quindi, il *cittadino speciale* libico – che può esserlo solo a discrezione unilaterale del governatore – ha ben pochi diritti: quello di *portare le armi secondo le norme della coscrizione militare* – che, naturalmente, anche per lui è obbligatoria –, di iscriversi all'*Associazione Musulmana del Littorio*, di poter fare *carriera militare nelle formazioni libiche* – ma con certe restrizioni – e, infine, di poter essere podestà – cioè sindaco – nei comuni dove la popolazione è *libica e mista*. In altre parole, il *cittadino speciale* libico ha solo il diritto di servire il regime sul piano militare e civile qualora esso lo ritenga opportuno, senza per ciò acquisire diritti stabili e consolidati. A ciò si aggiunga il fatto che, in ogni caso, il provvedimento che conferisce la *cittadinanza*

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Con il termine *residui*, il fascismo denominava tutto ciò che apparteneva al periodo *pre-fascista*, ivi compresi gli antifascisti. Sulla politica di *forza romana* applicata in Libia dopo il 28 ottobre 1922 cfr. note 6-7.

<sup>39</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sul viaggio di Mussolini in Libia del marzo 1937 cfr. A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., pp. 280-285; D. Mack Smith, *Le guerre del Duce*, cit., p. 143. Ma cfr. inoltre Luigi Salvatorelli-Giovanni Mira, *Storia d'Italia nel periodo fascista*, Torino, Einaudi, 1964, pp. 952-953; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il Duce, II: Lo Stato totalitario (1936-1940)*, Torino, Einaudi, 1996, pp. 394-396: tutti gli autori sottolineano il fatto che il 18 marzo 1937, sulle alture di Bugara, vicino Tripoli, Mussolini ricevette da un notevole arabo ormai del tutto asservito agli italiani, Yussuf Cherbisc, la *Spada dell'Islam* e, quindi, la consacrazione del suo ruolo di « *protettore* » degli islamici. L'unico particolare stridente con l'estrema solennità della cerimonia stava nel fatto che la *Spada dell'Islam* era stata fabbricata a Firenze. Su tale particolare cfr. A. Del Boca, *Gli italiani in Libia*, cit., p. 284.

<sup>40</sup> Sulla *cittadinanza italiana speciale* per gli arabi della Libia cfr. nota 22.

<sup>41</sup> Anche per tale particolare cfr. nota 22.

*speciale* ha applicazione limitata: infatti, secondo la stampa italiana, al 21 aprile 1938, solo 2020 libici ne hanno usufruito<sup>42</sup>.

Al di là del numero dei possessori della *cittadinanza speciale*, che è limitato e perciò sminuisce la portata reale del provvedimento, appare fin troppo chiara la vera intenzione che vi ha portato: irreggimentare la popolazione araba libica – come del resto prova anche l'istituzione della *Gioventù Araba del Littorio*, modellata sulle analoghe formazioni giovanili in attività in Italia – per tenerla meglio sotto controllo<sup>43</sup>. E, a questo punto, è chiaro lo scopo anche dell'istituzione della *cittadinanza speciale*, che è la seconda parte di una *politica del bastone e della carota* che viene esercitata sulla popolazione libica.

Un altro passo in avanti nell'irreggimentazione dei libici è stato compiuto con la creazione dei *Fasci musulmani*, di cui si può far parte solo se si possiede la *cittadinanza speciale* – e ciò richiama alla memoria l'immagine di un cane che si morde senza scopo la coda – che, a sua volta, non è ottenibile senza aver dato prova di fedeltà al regime. Va poi considerato il fatto che l'*Associazione Musulmana del Littorio* non ha alcuna autonomia ma dipende dal segretario del *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, e che le sue sezioni locali esistono solo nel quadro dei *Fasci* degli italiani veri in Libia, da cui sono controllate<sup>44</sup>.

Nella conclusione del suo studio, Angelo Tasca riconferma in sostanza quanto aveva affermato fin dall'inizio: non si può infatti parlare di una vera e propria *politica coloniale* italiana, e stavolta per la ragione aggiuntiva che essa è sempre stata subordinata alla politica estera fascista. Ma Tasca non si limita a questo: aggiunge, profeticamente, che il fascismo ha creato un impero coloniale all'apparenza compatto ma in realtà estremamente debole e vulnerabile, il che sarà provato, non molto tempo dopo, dalla II<sup>a</sup> guerra mondiale<sup>45</sup>.

Lo studio di Angelo Tasca su *La politica coloniale dell'Italia fascista* ha senza dubbio molti meriti. Prima di tutto, quello di anticipare, già nel 1939, i risultati in materia oggi resi pubblici dalla ricerca storica. In secondo luogo, quello di smitizzare fin da allora molti mitiche, all'epoca, erano accreditati dalla letteratura coloniale fascista. Ma, se ciò non bastasse, ne ha anche un altro: quello di precorrere una polemica su un altro mito ancora oggi corrente in materia di Italia coloniale: quello degli *italiani brava gente*, che è difficile da confutare, come dimostra la coraggiosa attività del miglior storico coloniale italiano, Angelo Del Boca, e che troppo a lungo ha ostacolato la ricerca della verità<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. *Il « protettore » dell'Islam*, in A. Tasca, art. cit., loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*.

<sup>45</sup> Cfr. *Ibidem*. Sulle vicende belliche che portarono alla perdita delle colonie cfr. nota 35.

<sup>46</sup> Cfr., in tal senso, il titolo, volutamente polemico, dell'ultimo libro di Angelo Del Boca, *Italiani brava gente?*, cit., concluso da un punto interrogativo, e anche il suo saggio *Una lunga battaglia per la verità*, in AA. VV., *I gas di Mussolini*, Roma, Editori Riuniti, 1996, pp. 17-48 (a proposito della negazione – ancor oggi diffusa nella *vox populi* in Italia – sull'uso di gas nella guerra d'Etiopia. Ma cfr., inoltre, la sua *Introduzione* ad AA.VV., *Le guerre coloniali del fascismo*, cit., pp. V-XV, in cui fra l'altro sottolinea, a proposito della rimozione in Italia di uno scomodo passato coloniale, che quando si iniziava ad organizzare il convegno da cui poi sarebbe uscito il libro sopracitato, non solo la presenza di storici etiopici e libici veniva considerata *inoportuna* (altro aggettivo sostitutivo di *controproducente*, come si soleva dire durante il fascismo), ma molti enti privati ritiravano il loro appoggio prima concesso: cfr. in tal senso *ivi*, p. VI. Un bel bilancio per un'Italia che, dopo aver detto a parole di *aver fatto i conti con il fascismo*, si definiva democratica, antifascista e repubblicana.





## ***La concepción histórica de Franco y su reflejo en el cine oficial del régimen***

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La democracia española recibió impulsos reactivados con la victoria del Frente Popular en las elecciones de 1936. El nuevo gobierno republicano encerró en sí la posibilidad del cambio, la de una serie de reformas que aliviaría las dificultades del pueblo, originadas sobre todo por las desigualdades sociales y económicas. Además, las regiones del país preveían la modificación positiva de sus reivindicaciones en cuanto a los derechos de autonomía. La clase de la aristocracia, la Iglesia Católica y el Ejército, todos fundidos en la ideología derechista, fueron liderados por el afán de preservar sus privilegios y mantener la unidad de España. Para detener los procesos contrarios a sus propios intereses apostaron por una resurrección militar. La Guerra Civil, que iba amargando la vida del pueblo español durante cuatro años y que convirtió en enemigos a los miembros de la misma nación, acabó con la gestión de un gobierno elegido democráticamente por los ciudadanos e instauró una dictadura de la que el país no pudo liberarse hasta 1975, año del fallecimiento del general Francisco Franco Bahamonde, Caudillo de España. Sin embargo, el año de su muerte no puso fin a las luchas feroces entre las fuerzas políticas que no han podido desprender del fantasma del régimen falangista ni siquiera hasta hoy.

### **Nación, Raza e Hispanidad**

“La Constitución se fundamenta en la indisoluble unidad de la Nación española, patria común e indivisible de todos los españoles...”<sup>1</sup>. Este fragmento proviene de la Constitución democrática que fue aprobada tres años después del fin de la dictadura franquista. De ese documento emana un estado donde el derecho democrático es la ley fundamental. Al mismo tiempo, el contenido de la frase citada caracteriza muy bien los treinta y seis años del régimen franquista. *Nación* y *unidad* son las dos palabras cruciales de la época dictatorial. Aunque ante los ojos del franquismo el pueblo español era unitario y pertenecía a la misma nación, a la misma *raza*, esto se refería solamente a la gente que estaba de acuerdo con el nuevo estado; se olvidaron de aquellos compatriotas que habían luchado en el otro bando para resguardar los valores de la República. Ellos, como traidores de la *Patria* y de los principios hispanos, ya no formaban parte del pueblo español.

La raza española era algo superior a los demás pueblos del mundo. Para defender la nación hispana, Franco se apoyó en las dos fuerzas que suponían para él la garantía de la

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<sup>1</sup> Artículo 2. de la *Constitución Española*, aprobada en 1978.

unidad: las Fuerzas Armadas (pilar militar y físico) y la Iglesia Católica (pilar espiritual). Este doble sostén favorecía la conservación de un régimen nacionalcatólico y ultraderechista, respaldado por las dos instituciones omnipotentes.

Con el fin de estabilizar el sistema el control sobre la sociedad llegó a ser total y universal. El general Franco (re)aprovechó los instrumentos que los dos países de ideología semejante, Alemania e Italia ya habían introducido en sus patrias respectivas para vigilar la nación. Franco fue un discípulo diligente y dócil: durante la Guerra Civil española y su “secuela”, la segunda Guerra Mundial, el Generalísimo adoptó los métodos de estos dos países hermanos y los perfeccionó para plasmar una variante verdaderamente hispana, donde todos los elementos de la administración política, de la sociedad y de la vida cotidiana estarían bajo la regulación del poder supremo. O sea, de él mismo.

La nación para él significaba algo más que España. La raza hispana comprendía no solamente a los españoles de la Península Ibérica, sino a los pueblos del continente americano también, a las naciones que habitaban los países de América Latina. La concepción teórica la formuló la noción de la *Hispanidad*: el concepto que unificaba a todos los miembros de la raza hispana sin restricciones geográficas. Los rasgos comunes eran, ante todo, la sangre, la lengua, las tradiciones históricas y la cultura hispana, todo lo que hacía que esa nación fuera un cierto *übermensch* ibérico.

Naturalmente, partiendo de las doctrinas franquistas, esta unión hispánica fue realizable solamente con España al timón. El punto relevante del doctrinal de FET y de las JONS<sup>2</sup> decía: “Tenemos voluntad de Imperio. Afirmamos que la plenitud histórica de España es el Imperio... Respecto a los países de Hispanoamérica, tendemos a la unificación de cultura, de intereses económicos y de Poder. España alega su condición de eje espiritual del mundo hispánico como título de preeminencia en las empresas universales.”<sup>3</sup> La esencia sublime de esta Hispanidad fue tal que desde 1947 las expresiones como Mundo Hispánico o Cultura Hispánica las podían utilizar solamente si su uso fue de carácter propagandístico o de algún objetivo que contribuyera a la grandeza de la nación.<sup>4</sup> La creación del Consejo de Hispanidad y posteriormente la del Instituto de Cultura Hispánica fueron destinados a salvaguardar que las relaciones entre España e Hispanoamérica corrieran en el cauce idealizado.

La cohesión de los pueblos fue posible en virtud de la forja de una sensación de pertenecer a la misma nación, a la misma raza, al universo de la Hispanidad. Este triunvirato de nociones formó un nuevo sistema de coordenadas intransigente que prestó una delimitación clara e inalienable de la condición de poder autodefinirse como español.

Además, esta teoría fue auspiciada por otro elemento constructivo: la existencia de un enemigo común. Ya durante la Guerra Civil habían aparecido las consignas que tacharon de comunista, anarquista, bolchevique, etc. a todos los españoles que luchaban en el otro bando. El apoyo moderado de la Unión Soviética y la llegada de las Brigadas Internacionales incrementó la sensación de que los republicanos fueran asistidos por las

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<sup>2</sup> Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Tradicionalista: es el nombre del partido único que se creó en 1937 por la fusión de aquellos grupos y partidos que participaban en la sublevación militar.

<sup>3</sup> Citado por: Julio GIL PECHARROMÁN, *La política exterior del franquismo (1939-1975)*, Ediciones Flor del Viento, 2008. 33.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem.* 162.

fuerzas comunistas internacionales. En parte tenían razón, porque muchas personas prosoviéticas apoyaban al bando republicano, pero en primer lugar en teoría: el auxilio práctico y material desmerecía del teórico. Además, los comunistas, tanto en las Brigadas como en las tropas republicanas, pertenecían a la minoría. Pero su mera existencia y presencia ya servía como coartada perfecta para tildar de comunista y judeomasónica a las tropas opuestas y, al finalizar la guerra, a todo el mundo que simpatizaba con el bando vencido.

Durante la Guerra Civil y la Segunda Guerra Mundial los mayores enemigos fueron los "rojos" y los poderes occidentales que defendían la democracia; por lo tanto, los mejores aliados y ejemplos a seguir fueron el país fascista y el nazi. No obstante, después del segundo conflicto mundial, al desaparecer los imperios de Hitler y Mussolini, Franco ya no podía referirse a ellos como ídolos y tuvo que paliar su ideología carpetovetónica hacia el las potencias extranjeras. Para que el mundo aceptara España dentro del terreno de juego internacional, el país necesitaba presentarse como una nación democrática donde los rasgos dictatoriales fueron apenas percibibles o inexistentes. En esa época, cuando ya se había desenvuelto la Guerra Fría, el enemigo demoníaco lo encontraron en el comunismo. Según la doctrina franquista los poderes democráticos, España incluido, debían tocar todos los resortes para luchar contra esa ideología demoledora procedente de la Unión Soviética. Franco pudo compaginar perfectamente su feroz anticomunismo con el mantenimiento de la espiritualidad católica y la fuerza invencible de la Hispanidad.

¿De qué se nutría esa superioridad hispánica? ¿Qué factores alimentaron la conciencia de los españoles sobre un pasado glorioso, un presente solemne y un futuro prometedor, todo bajo la égida del triángulo de la Nación, Raza e Hispanidad? Todas las manifestaciones culturales de la época habían de corroborar estas posturas susodichas, transfiriendo así la cultura a la esfera de la política nacional. Como el pasado nos ha demostrado muy bien, el medio cinematográfico servía fielmente siempre a los ideólogos de las dictaduras.

## Una historia nacional para un cine nacional

La historia de naciones ha sido una fuente fiel y fácilmente asequible para los cineastas desde el nacimiento del cinematógrafo hasta nuestros días (y seguirá siendo un manantial de historias entrecruzadas en el futuro también). El cine, como culminación de todos los artes, es el medio perfecto para transmitir cualquier mensaje con una escala de connotaciones heterogéneas. Su vigencia se irradia no solamente al pasado narrado en el film, pero mantiene su validez en el presente también con arreglo a las intenciones del creador o de la ideología política (y económica) que se sitúa detrás del proyecto. Según el director de cine español José Antonio Nieves Conde "...la esencia de un film es el resultado de la fusión de dos elementos base: el documento y el argumento, entroncados en el tiempo en que se rueda, aunque ese argumento y ese documento puedan ser expresados intemporalmente."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> VV.AA.: *El cine español, desde Salamanca (1955/1995)*, Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Cultura y Educación, Salamanca, 1995. VI.

El papel del cine en cuanto a la representación de la realidad es todavía discutible para los artistas incluso hoy, pero una cosa es incuestionable: la película es capaz de expresar con la ayuda de imágenes, música, diálogos y efectos de sonido aquellos sentimientos y pensamientos que los otros artes, medios y la lengua no. El cine crea un mundo para el espectador fuera de la realidad que provoca una serie variopinta de emociones en él. Los fotogramas ayudan al público evadirse de la realidad e “ir de excursión” a otro mundo, al universo de la fantasía que puede estar en contacto con el entorno real, pero su inmediatez queda eclipsada por la sensación del milagro de la sala de proyección. Por este rasgo fue el cine capaz de convertirse en uno de los instrumentos más relevantes de la propaganda y de los dictadores. Ya durante la Primera Guerra Mundial había constituido un elemento bastante notable en la actividad de comunicación masiva de los países beligerantes, pero la mayor trascendencia la granjeó en los años 1930 y 40 cuando los dictadores más importantes de Europa (Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini y Franco) se dieron cuenta de que el cine era una de las armas más fuertes para influir en la sociedad.<sup>6</sup> (la célebre frase “de todas las armas, el cine es la más importante para nosotros” procede de Lenin, pero todos los dictadores del siglo XX expusieron una enunciación semejante). Actualmente, aunque el número de las dictaduras se ha disminuido en las últimas décadas, el cine sigue desempeñando un papel esencial en la vida de las democracias. Según algunos (ej. Hugo Münsterberg, Sergei Eisenstein) la película era capaz de reflejar la realidad con alta precisión, mientras otros (ej. André Bazin, Sigfried Kracauer) opinaron que los fotogramas eran una mera interpretación subjetiva del cineasta y los hechos reales servían solamente como punto de partida y reflexión.<sup>7</sup>

El historiador de cine español José María Caparrós Lera distingue entre tres tipos de películas que tiene algo que ver con la historia.<sup>8</sup> La primera categoría la constituyen los films de valor histórico o sociológico, cuyo contenido puede convertirse en testimonios de la historia de la comunidad presentada en la obra (como los del movimiento neorrealista italiano y algunos de la escuela soviética de los años veinte, ej. *La huelga* [Стачка, Sergei M. Eisenstein, 1924]). El segundo tipo ya tiene intención de demostrar episodios de la historia directamente, a través de evocar acontecimientos o personajes importantes, pero el tratamiento del tema es demasiado romántico, como una novela retratada, con muchos añadidos de la imaginación creativa (como los “blockbusters” de Hollywood: *Lo que el viento se llevó* [Gone with the Wind, Victor Fleming, George Cukor, Sam Wood, 1939] o

<sup>6</sup> Sobre este tema véase: Andrés LÉNÁRT, “Bases y conceptos de la política cinematográfica de Franco” en: *Acta Scientiarum Socialium XXVII*. Kaposvár, 2009. 37-48.

<sup>7</sup> Para un resumen sobre las dos teorías opuestas, véase: <http://filmhistory.wordpress.com/2007/08/31/realism-formalism-and-classicism/> (13 de diciembre de 2009) A las teorías cinematográficas y a su valoración se dedican, entre otros: Dudley ANDREW, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction*, Oxford, 1976; Dudley ANDREW, *Concepts in Film Theory*, Oxford, 1984; Yvette BÍRÓ, *A hetedik művészet*, Budapest, 1994; Joaquim ROMAGUERA I RAMÍO – Homero ALSINA THEVENET (coord.), *Textos y manifiestos del cine*, Ediciones Cátedra, Madrid, 1998; Robert STAM: *Film Theory. An Introduction*. London – Oxford – New York, 2000; Réka CRISTIAN – Zoltán DRAGON, *Encounters of the Filmic Kind: Guidebook to Film Theories*, Szeged, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> José María CAPARRÓS LERA, “El cine como documento histórico” en: María Antonia PAZ REBOLLO – Julio MONTERO DÍAZ (coord.), *Historia y Cine: Realidad, ficción y propaganda*, Editorial Complutense, Madrid, 1995. 42-45.

*Gandhi* [Richard Attenborough, 1982]). La tercera clase comprende las películas que sí quieren retratar un hecho histórico más o menos de manera fidedigna, a través de la cámara subjetiva del cineasta (aquí pertenecen las obras maestras de Eisenstein, como *El acorazado Potemkin* [Броненосец Потёмкин, 1925] u *Octubre* [Октябрь, 1928] y algunas películas de Jean Renoir). Los estados totalitarios sacan el mayor provecho de los dos últimos grupos, porque el primero encierra en sí el peligro de que el espectador, sin la transmisión de mensajes obvios, llegue a conclusiones contrarias a la intención original del cineasta o del régimen. O sea, tienen miedo de que el público se atreva a pensar independientemente, sin restricciones impuestas por el gobierno.

Un rasgo común de la mayoría de las películas oficiales de los regimenes dictatoriales es su actitud hacia el pasado nacional. Los vínculos con la revolución soviética y el pasado ruso fueron elementos constantes del cine en la época de Stalin, mientras tanto la cinematografía mussoliniana también se autodefinía mediante la relación del presente fascista con el pasado italiano. Para ser más preciso, varios films fueron rodados en estos países que no tuvieron referencia clara al pasado (o presente) nacional, pero la ideología oficial del régimen se manifestó explícitamente a través de las películas de ambientación histórica.

Franco se alineó perfectamente a esa tendencia bien ensayada.

Para definir el presente de una nación, hay que especificar aquellos elementos del pasado cuya herencia es aceptable y valiosa en las circunstancias actuales también. Al reconocer esta necesidad, los ideólogos del franquismo (y el propio Franco también) comenzaron a acotar y examinar con esmero los hechos y personas significativos del pasado y analizaron su peso en cuanto a la formación nacional. Naturalmente, debían excluir aquellos sucesos o épocas enteras que llevaban en sí alguna connotación negativa concerniente a la dignidad hispana. Los episodios seleccionados fueron aptos para que se llevaran a la pantalla cinematográfica y con ellos el medio propagandístico del régimen impulsó al pueblo español que interiorizara los principios excelsos del estado nacionalcatólico-ultraderechista.

Todo hubo de efectuarse con fuerza propia, ya que Franco quería independizarse del extranjero por todos conceptos (al mismo tiempo, aceptó el auspicio de Alemania e Italia en muchos terrenos). En 1939 Franco participó en el Consejo Nacional de FET y de las JONS y, al hablar sobre esta amplia autarquía, el Generalísimo precisó que España debía dejar de importar films extranjeros y tenía que rodar obras enteramente españolas que reflejaban la españolidad.<sup>9</sup>

El gobierno necesitaba el respaldo de una empresa que tenía la capacidad material y económica de prestar la infraestructura imprescindible para llevar a cabo los proyectos. Ya antes de la Guerra Civil se había formado el estudio Cifesa, empresa cinematográfica de la familia Casanova que disponía de los instrumentos técnicos necesarios. La dinastía pudiente valenciana pronto apostó por un cine verdaderamente nacional, alabando los valores hispanos incluso antes de la guerra. Esta ideología fue expuesta en varios números de su noticiario. "El caudal de nuestra gloriosa historia, la riqueza incomparable de nuestra literatura, clásica y contemporánea, el valioso tesoro folclórico de nuestras canciones populares y la singular e inagotable cantera de nuestras costumbres y modos de vida, son

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<sup>9</sup> Sobre el discurso véase: *La Vanguardia*, 6 de junio de 1939.

los motivos acuciadores a la vez que anchos y dilatados caminales por donde llevamos y hemos de seguir llevando toda nuestra producción.”<sup>10</sup> Esto y otros números del noticiario<sup>11</sup> demuestran que la empresa seguía el camino nacional en asistir la ideología nacionalista del país. Durante la guerra ofrecieron sus servicios al bando insurrecto y en los primeros años del franquismo ya colaboraban de consuno con el régimen. Aludiendo al discurso de Franco sobre el cine, los ejecutivos de Cifesa escribieron: “No podemos olvidar las ideas que el Caudillo vertió de forma certera... Si la misión de nuestro Caudillo es reconstruir España... la función nuestra, la de todo español, queda delimitada a ser mero ejecutante de sus postulados.”<sup>12</sup> En la primera mitad de los años cuarenta Cifesa prácticamente equivalía al franquismo: como un portavoz, los valores exaltados por el régimen fueron transmitidos al público a través de las películas de “la antorcha de los éxitos”<sup>13</sup>. Aunque la mayoría de sus largometrajes pertenecía al género de la comedia, los films de ambientación histórica llegaron a ser los productos más característicos y de mayor repercusión de esta cooperación íntima (aunque el número de estas obras fue en minoría absoluta). La colaboración se volvió incluso más estrecha cuando se creó amistad entre Vicente Casanova y el almirante Carrero Blanco, persona de confianza del Caudillo. La mayoría de los productos filmicos incluso recibió la calificación de *interés nacional*, una valoración superior que se otorgaba a aquellos films que disponían de un contenido notable (para el régimen, por supuesto).

No todas las películas de ambientación histórica provenían del estudio Cifesa, pero la mayor importancia la atribuían a ellas. Los gastos de rodaje fueron enormes: estas películas, tanto en su fabricación como en la publicidad relevante y en la recaudación en taquilla, suponían unas verdaderas superproducciones. La receta fue bastante simple: mezclar la aventura con el hilo romántico, metiendo todo dentro de un acontecimiento histórico como telón de fondo. Pero la autenticidad y veracidad de los hechos no fueron principios fundamentales en cuanto a la narración. Según las palabras de uno de los directores eximios del género, Juan de Orduña<sup>14</sup>: “Yo siempre he creído que las películas históricas para que sean verdaderamente soportables deben de tener 20 ó un 30% de rigor histórico y del 70 o 80% de apuntalamiento de fantasía”.

En los sucesivos citamos como ejemplo algunos motivos y filmes concretos para esta reconstrucción histórica audiovisual, delimitando someramente las características más conspicuas por las cuales ocupan un puesto relevante tanto en la historia nacional española como en la historia cinematográfica del país.

## El pasado: la grandeza nacional

Los largometrajes que retratan épocas anteriores al franquismo tienen la denominación común “cartón de piedra”: esta expresión se refiere al decorado de las escenas, donde los muros y paredes de los castillos y de los interiores se construían no de piedra, sino de este

<sup>10</sup> *Noticiario Cifesa*, marzo de 1936.

<sup>11</sup> Por ejemplo: *Noticiario Cifesa*, junio de 1935.

<sup>12</sup> *Noticiario Cifesa*, julio de 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Lema oficial de Cifesa.

<sup>14</sup> Antonio CASTRO, *El cine español en el banquillo*, Editorial Fernando Torres, Valencia, 1974. 296-297.

material más ligero. Si echamos un vistazo a los temas de las películas oficiales del régimen (o sea, aquellas que se rodaron con el visto bueno de la administración, se adherieron a la ideología imperante y a veces incluso recibieron la calificación de interés nacional), podemos identificar aquellos períodos de la historia nacional de los cuales el aparato franquista estaba orgulloso.

¿Cuáles son los temas de preferencia desde el aspecto de la historia nacional?

Las dos cuestiones cruciales del cine oficial franquista son la unidad de la patria y la figura de un personaje destacado que lleva a las espaldas el progreso histórico. Esas figuras muchas veces son mujeres, simbolizando la figura de la madre protectora, o sea, la madre patria. Además, ajustándose a la concepción del franquismo donde la familia es la formación más importante de la humanidad, la madre es la responsable de cuidar a la unidad de la familia y hacer posible que los hombres sirvieran a la patria con la máxima lealtad. A veces aparece el enemigo, tanto exterior como interior, que amenaza esta unidad nacional, pero las fuerzas hispanas católicas evidentemente lo vencerán. La personificación del enemigo tomó cuerpo según la modificación de la política exterior de España y de su voluntad de mostrarse más abierta y democrática con el paso del tiempo. Como ya lo hemos mencionado, la glorificación del pasado egregio paso a paso se iba completando con un discurso anticomunista.

Las décadas anteriores a la época de los Reyes Católicos forman un conjunto de películas en las cuales hacen hincapié más bien en los hechos de los héroes, las personas que habían modelado la historia nacional hacia una dirección positiva. Los sucesos importantes de la historia española aparecen solamente en relación con ellos. En estos films aparece tanto la figura relevante de Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar ("El Cid"), el caballero más heroico del siglo XI como los reyes e hidalgos bravos de la época. El género es generalmente el de aventura, rodeado por un hilo romántico y mucho heroísmo, recalcando las virtudes cristianas. Destacamos aquí *Reina Santa* [Rafael Gil, 1947] que narra la vida de la Reina Isabel de Portugal y *Amaya* [Luis Marquina, 1952], una voluminosa superproducción de Cifesa sobre la familia de un patriarca vasco.

Un tema crucial lo suponía la conquista de América (1492). Aunque la mayoría de las producciones sobre Cristóbal Colón y las conquistas fue rodada en el extranjero (sobre todo en los Estados Unidos y en América Latina), España también aportó un número de films que glorificaron tanto la conquista como la grandeza del país. En 1950 el Instituto de Cultura Hispánica convocó un concurso para las empresas cinematográficas de España y América Latina.<sup>15</sup> El objeto del concurso fue realizar una película bajo la égida del temario "el descubrimiento de América". La convocatoria ya predeterminó cuáles serían los criterios de valoración, quiénes serían los asesores del rodaje y señaló que el equipo filmico dispondría de la carabela reconstruida "Santa María". El resultado fue *Alba de América* [Juan de Orduña, 1951], una producción de Cifesa que narra la conquista de América y las vicisitudes de Colón. Fue un film importantísimo para el régimen: contó con el apoyo total de los "hombres fuertes" del gobierno y de Franco, el tema concreto fue sugerido por el Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y recibió el premio de la mejor película del Sindicato Nacional del Espectáculo. Sin embargo, según el alto representante de la Dirección General de Cinematografía, José María García Escudero (y según la crítica también) esa película fue

<sup>15</sup> *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 19 de abril de 1950.

bastante mediocre. De ahí que el director general negó otorgar la clasificación “de interés nacional” a la película, paralelamente con concederla a otro largometraje, bastante crítico con el régimen franquista (*Surcos* [José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951]) Tras estos dos asuntos que engendraron un verdadero escándalo en las capas altas del régimen, García Escudero dimitió para prevenir que le relevaran de su cargo.<sup>16</sup> Naturalmente, el nuevo director general de cinematografía dio a *Alba de América* la calificación de interés nacional sin reparos.<sup>17</sup> A pesar de esto, al ver la cinta podemos llegar a la conclusión de que se trata de una película muy aburrida, con emociones desbordantes e hilos dramáticos rocambolescos y la interpretación de los actores tampoco nos da mucha ilusión por los recursos estilísticos demasiado rudimentarios y por el dramatismo exagerado e innecesariamente sobreactuado.

Otra pieza del género que coloca en el foco el continente americano es *La Nao Capitana* [Florián Rey, 1947], producción de la empresa Suevia Films, gran rival de Cifesa. Es la adaptación de una novela popular que retrata las experiencias de un grupo de personas con el anhelo de establecerse en el Nuevo Mundo. Los viajeros del barco y el tono pomposo de la película son otros ejemplos del hispanismo exaltado: la madre patria y el nuevo continente se vinculan por la identidad racial y estos dos universos se unen mediante el viaje. No obstante, cabe añadir que la realización es pobre en estilo y en puesta en escena, el famoso director Rey no deja en el film ninguna huella de profesionalismo. Pero la intención propagandística queda patente, incluso la exponen perfectamente en su cartel publicitario: “El alma, el sol, y la vida de España camino de América en el Arca de la Raza... La más grande y espectacular visión cinematográfica del genio de España... traición y sacrificio, lucha y sosiego, esperanza y duda en el siglo de los héroes españoles”.<sup>18</sup>

Durante el franquismo varias otras películas trataron el tema de la relación entre España y América Latina, a veces con un toque enfatizado de la propaganda, a veces alabando el hispanismo solamente a través del comportamiento de los personajes y de sus aventuras y desventuras. De vez en cuando nació una mezcla de estas dos temáticas, como la película más patriótica de Ladislao Vajda, realizador de origen húngaro, la *Ronda española* (1951): la trama pivota sobre la actividad de los grupos de Coros y Danzas de la Sección Femenina de Falange que viajan a América Latina con fines propagandísticos.

Aparte del asunto de los descubrimientos, la cinematografía franquista encontró sus temas perfectos en el siglo XV y en la época de la Casa de los Habsburgos. La raíz del catolicismo y del afán imperial del régimen la encontraron en el reinado de los Reyes Católicos. Este matrimonio real, y sobre todo la personalidad de Isabel de Castilla, proporcionaba para Franco la quintaesencia del hispanismo y del nacionalcatolicismo. La época de los Austrias, los descubrimientos, el protagonismo de la Iglesia Católica (junto con la Inquisición) y el bienestar del reino fueron los puntos de referencia para los franquistas en cuanto a la grandeza de la raza hispana. La culminación de la popularidad de las películas de cartón de piedra y de la colaboración entre Estado y Cinematografía llegó en 1948 con *Locura de Amor* [Juan de Orduña]. El film cosechó un éxito sin parangón (el mayor en la historia de Cifesa) entre el público español e iberoamericano y el régimen vio

<sup>16</sup> José María GARCÍA ESCUDERO, *Mis siete vidas. De las brigadas anarquistas a juez del 23-F*, Editorial Planeta, Barcelona, 1995. 230-232.

<sup>17</sup> *Archivo General de la Administración* (Alcalá de Henares). Cultura. Expediente 36/04724.

<sup>18</sup> Cartel publicitario de *Alba de América*, accesible en la *Filmoteca Nacional* de España, Madrid.



en ello la verificación de su convicción sobre la necesidad del pueblo español: a la gente le complacía admirar en la pantalla aquella época de la historia nacional que servía como germen para la situación positiva actual. Esta película en cuestión versa sobre Juana la Loca, hija de los Reyes Católicos y sus peripecias amorosas que condujeron a la locura. El énfasis recae en el amor: la pasión fulminante de la protagonista hacia su marido y la vida. Ya que la historia nacional servía otra vez como telón de fondo para la narración, el resultado fue una mezcla perfecta de historia y amor.

Aparte de las películas citadas, los tres siglos ente 1400 y 1700 fueron el ambiente preferido para los cineastas adeptos al franquismo si querían situar su relato dentro de un marco histórico. El número de filmes de este índole es bastante cuantioso. La era de los Borbones ya no fascinaba tanto a las autoridades; para el régimen la grandeza de España se manifestaba desde los Reyes Católicos hasta la guerra de sucesión; la época borbónica, las Repúblicas, o sea, todas las décadas hasta la Guerra Civil, evidenciaban el declive de la grandeza. Las películas rodadas en la época de Franco, si eligen los siglos XVIII y XIX como escenario, tocan preferentemente los temas de amor y aventura, pero el orgullo nacional se mueve en una escala menor que en el caso de los largometrajes arriba mencionados.

### El presente: la Cruzada nacional

En 1941 nació la película que encerró en sí la naturaleza de la gloria nacional, demostró el quid de la ideología franquista y se convirtió en el film-manifiesto de ella. Se trata de *Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia). El guionista del film fue el mismísimo general Francisco Franco bajo el seudónimo Jaime de Andrade. El Caudillo escribió ese guión novelado (con el subtítulo "Anecdotario para el guión de una película") con la intención de que alguien lo adaptara a la pantalla, creando así una especie de película de propaganda perfecta: los valores del hispanismo se irradian de todas las palabras y de todos los hechos de los personajes. El año siguiente publicaron el guión también, pero Franco quería permanecer detrás de su seudónimo (aunque la equivalencia entre Franco y Andrade fue un secreto a voces en los círculos dirigentes). La obra nos presenta los miembros de una familia y sus peripecias entre la guerra de independencia de 1808 y la guerra civil de 1936, recalcando tales tópicos como el patriotismo o la vida militar, la que ya no es una simple profesión, sino un credo y predestinación (en consonancia con la directiva oficial del régimen de Franco, según la cual el ejército es la garantía del Estado para el orden y la paz). Andrade (Franco) escribe en la dedicatoria: "A las juventudes de España, que con su sangre abrieron el camino a nuestro resurgir".<sup>19</sup> Más adelante, sigue así en la introducción: "Vais a vivir escenas de la vida de una generación; episodios inéditos de la Cruzada española, presididos por la nobleza y espiritualidad características de nuestra raza".<sup>20</sup> La familia Churrua posee todos los valores de los que una verdadera familia española debe ostentar: son verdaderos patriotas, luchan en las guerras con valentía y son católicos a ultranza. Sólo un miembro de

<sup>19</sup> Jaime de ANDRADE, *Raza. Anecdotario para el guión de una película*, Madrid, 1942. Dedicatoria.

<sup>20</sup> *Idem*. Introducción.

la familia se inclina a la ideología de los republicanos, pero en fin se arrepiente de sus hechos, se suma a la línea "correcta" y acepta la moral nacional. Se nota una fuerte huella autobiográfica: tanto la familia como los individuos disponen de características que tienen sus antecedentes en la personalidad de Franco y la de sus antecesores. En 1950, cuando la situación internacional ya se había cambiado, prepararon un remontaje de la película para que su mensaje fuera puesta al día (al margen del contenido moral eterno). De esta nueva versión ya quedaron fuera aquellos diálogos y escenas que habrían podido ofender a las potencias occidentales y a los Estados Unidos (como los saludos fascistas o la alusión negativa a los EE.UU.).

La Guerra Civil (1936-39) marcó una cesura en la historia de España. Españoles lucharon contra españoles y el derramamiento de sangre incomprensible partió el país en dos: los nacionales y los republicanos. Según la propaganda franquista los republicanos representaban el pecado de la alta traición y formaban parte de una conspiración judeomasónica y comunista. Sólo el bando nacional fue capaz de combatir con el Diablo porque ellos encarnaban el bien de la Patria y la fuerza divina les apoyaba incondicionalmente. De aquí venía la denominación a la que Franco haría referencia más tarde en su guión: los nacionales participaron en una Cruzada contra el Mal, como los heraldos de Dios. Ya que la Iglesia Católica respaldó su Cruzada sin inmutarse, Franco se sentía autorizado para comportarse como el vicario terrenal del Señor.

Durante la Guerra Civil el bando nacional rodaba solamente noticiarios y documentales de propaganda y los largometrajes los importaban de Italia y Alemania. Tras la contienda, con la ayuda de Cifesa e individuos acomodados, ya fueron capaces de poner en marcha una industria cinematográfica nacionalcatólica. Dos fueron los temas predilectos del régimen: los filmes de ambientación histórica (ya tratados en el capítulo anterior) y el cine de Cruzada. Concentrémonos ahora en este último.

La mayoría de estos films, sobre todo en la época de la posguerra, tiene como objetivo exaltar los valores nacionales, justificar la insurrección militar y acusar a los republicanos de cooperar con las fuerzas antiespañolas. La demostración del heroísmo moral y físico de los combatientes franquistas y de la maldad demoniaca del enemigo son objetivos primordiales de las películas bélicas y melodramas de este subgénero. Cuando el recuerdo de la Guerra Civil comenzó a palidecer, la conspiración comunista entró en primer plano como tema principal; el comunismo que quería invadir España y destruir las tradiciones nacionales. Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial el cine de Cruzada se completó con estos films anticomunistas, donde los héroes españoles habían de impedir la actividad destructora de los agentes infiltrados de la Unión Soviética.

Las películas se rodaron conforme a varios subtemas: las Brigadas Internacionales, la influencia de Rusia, los anarquistas de Cataluña, el tema de Guernica, la vida cotidiana durante la guerra y la posguerra, etc.

*Sin novedad en el Alcázar* [Augusto Genina, 1940] es una de las obras que descuelga dentro del cine de Cruzada, rodada en coproducción con la Italia fascista. La ideología de la grandeza nacional, junto a la exaltación de la raza hispánica, aparece de modo sublime en este largometraje que narra los sucesos bélicos acaecidos durante el asedio republicano del Alcázar de Toledo. El objetivo del realizador fue preparar una variante española del *Acorazado Potemkin* soviético, pero con un mensaje mucho más patriótico y ferozmente anticomunista: demostrar que los valores nacionales de España habían sido protegidos por

el bando nacional. Genina lo expuso así en una entrevista: "Potemkin significaba el film de la revolución destructora. El Alcázar lo es de la revolución constructora".<sup>21</sup>

A finales de los años 50 la carga anticomunista llegó a ser más débil, la énfasis se ponía más bien en las luchas heroicas y en las relaciones interpersonales (siguiendo el modelo hollywoodiano). Estos films ya representaban la nueva meta de la cinematografía franquista: en vez de una fuerte propaganda filmica, los cineastas intentaron elaborar temas más inocentes e inofensivos, llevar a la pantalla historias con las cuales el espectador podía identificarse. Estas nuevas películas tenían una ambientación en la Guerra Civil o en el franquismo donde la ideología imperante ya formaba parte de la vida cotidiana. Ya no hacía falta convencer al espectador de la razón de los nacionalistas, puesto que la sociedad estaba impregnada por ese círculo de ideas y directivas.

Si una nación quiere definir su presente, ha de establecer una relación clara con su pasado. La actitud hacia el pasado nacional puede cobrar importancia en las democracias también, pero en un estado totalitario constituye una piedra angular. Todas las dictaduras dieron con los medios perfectos para transmitir su concepción histórica hacia los ciudadanos y el aparato cinematográfico desempeñó un papel primordial en esta misión. Aunque la existencia de las formaciones autocráticas es bastante rara en el mundo actual, la fuerza de los medios de comunicación audiovisuales sigue siendo inmensa y formidable. Además, su capacidad de influir en el espectador se va incrementando.

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<sup>21</sup> Augusto GENINA, "¿Por qué he realizado Sin novedad en el Alcázar?" en: *Primer Plano*, no. 3, noviembre de 1940.



# *The Fall of Constantinople. Its musical remembrance in the 1950's*

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## **Introduction**

In my article I present a comparative analysis of Manolis Kalomiris's opera the *Constantine Palaeologus* and Cemal Resid Rey's symphonic poem *Fatih Sultan Mehmet* from the point of view of national canons, political backgrounds and aesthetics. Both pieces deal with the last siege of Constantinople (1453), which ended in the victory of the Ottoman army. This historic turning point inspired very sophisticated, interpretative compositions on both of sides of the former frontline. In the epilogue of my article this horizon is widened by the Hungarian musical reading of this great historical event.

In 1953 – 500 years after the siege – the contemporary artistic remembrance turned the fall of Constantinople into an important part of both national mythologies. These mythologies can demonstrate that Turkey belongs to Europe, and Europe is in debt to Greece. Both nations and even both states have problems with their respective political identities, with the acceptance of their near past and with their vulnerability to the new superpowers. Of course, the artistic pieces analysed below were composed not for political reasons, although their plots and receptions are understandable only with attention to the political background of their births.

## **Political and historical background**

### *The fall of Constantinople (1453)*

The siege of the Constantinople lasted from Friday, 6 April 1453 until Tuesday, 29 May 1453 (according to the Julian calendar). Constantinople attacked by the Ottoman army (80,000 men and large numbers of irregulars), under the command of Sultan Mehmed II was defended by the army of Emperor Constantine XI (whose forces, consisted of about 7,000 men, 2,000 of whom were foreign). The last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaiologos, was last seen casting off his imperial regalia and throwing himself into hand-to-hand combat after the walls of the city were taken.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hindley, Geoffrey: *A Brief History of the Crusades*. Robinson, London, 2004. 300.

Even the siege was not a predetermined victory of the Ottomans, the overpower of the Turkish army was really frustrating – as the eyewitness wrote: “They found the Turks coming right up under the walls and seeking battle, particularly the janissaries... and when one or two of them were killed, at once more Turks came and took away the dead ones... without caring how near they came to the city walls. Our men shot at them with guns and crossbows, aiming at the Turk who was carrying away his dead countryman, and both of them would fall to the ground dead, and then there came other Turks and took them away, none fearing death, but being willing to let ten of themselves be killed rather than suffer the shame of leaving a single Turkish corpse by the walls.”<sup>2</sup>

During the two months’ battle the Turkish army started to be demoralised by the strong defence of the city. The Turks left their troops in a huge number, that’s why Mehmet II had no time to wait more. The fanatised army ran up on the walls on 28 May. In the savage final assault the gifted Genoese strategist, Giovanni Giustiniani was wounded, and this loss increased the chaos and rage in the city so much that the Ottomans could enter it. In the last hours the Byzantine army converged on the square in front of the great church of Hagia Sophia whose bronze gates were barred by a huge throng of civilians inside, praying for divine protection. After the doors were breached, the Turkish troops sorted out the people according their value on the slave markets. Mehmed II allowed his troops to plunder the city for three days, during which multitudes of civilians were massacred and enslaved.<sup>3</sup> According to the cited English historian John Julius Norwich and byzantinist Alexander Vasiliev there was rape, massacre, looting and pillage.<sup>4</sup> As the Venetian surgeon Nicolo Barbaro depicts: “All through the day the Turks made a great slaughter of Christians through the city.”<sup>5</sup>

The Byzantine historian George Sphrantzes was an other eyewitness to the fall of Constantinople. In his chronicle we can read about the third day of the conquest: „On the third day after the fall of our city, the Sultan celebrated his victory with a great, joyful triumph. He issued a proclamation: the citizens of all ages who had managed to escape detection were to leave their hiding places throughout the city and come out into the open, as they were remain free and no question would be asked. He further declared the restoration of houses and property to those who had abandoned our city before the siege, if they returned home, they would be treated according to their rank and religion, as if nothing had changed.”<sup>6</sup>

The Modern Greek and Turkish states forming the bridge between the East and the West are the heirs of the former Byzantine Empire, nationally and especially geopolitically. Thus, the fall of Constantinople is a very important event in the new states’ identity politics. Even in the near past Constantinople was considered as the hoped capital of Greece remaining

<sup>2</sup> Nicolo Barbaro: *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople 1453*. New York, 1969. Available at: <http://www.deremilitari.org/resources/sources/constantinople3.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Michael Llewellyn: *The Fall of Constantinople. History Makers magazine*, No. 5, Marshall Cavendish, Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1969. 192.

<sup>4</sup> Vasiliev, A. A. (Alexander Alexandrovich): *History of the Byzantine empire, 324–1453* Vol.2, University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Barbaro: *Diary...* Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Sphrantzes, George: *The Fall of the Byzantine Empire: A Chronicle by George Sphrantzes 1401–1477*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1980.

abroad. On the other hand even if Istanbul belongs to Turkey, it is still an alien part in the "body" of country, too cosmopolitan and European to the Turks, that's why the capital was set in Ankara.

A city never integrated and much longed for. Similarly to several places of symbolic significance (e.g. Jerusalem, Strasbourg, Fiume) the fate of Constantinople presents the two sides of the same (hi)story, for which there is no solution that could satisfy all the claimants.

### *Greece and Turkey in the 1950's*

The modern Greece was created in 1830 by the victory of the war of independence against the Ottomans. Between 1830 and 1923 the so-called "Great Idea" aimed to reunite all the Ancient Greek regions. This politics failed in 1923, when the Turkish army expelled the Greek army from Asia Minor. Even a strong supporter of this ideology, Eleftherios Venizelos (Prime minister: 1910–1920) declared unrealistic the claims for Constantinople and Asia Minor.

Years of constant coup d'État followed and Venizelos seized power in 1928 (he fails in 1932). E. Venizelos was followed by Ioannis Metaxas in 1936, then the German troops invaded the country, finally a civil war raged from 1944 till 1949. Being in the focus of the attention for both the Western and Soviet Empires it was an unavoidable step to join the NATO in 1952. Democracy started to take shape only in the 1950's – with the communists and ex-German-collaborators exiled on prison islands till 1963. Thus, Greece had to face three big political problems: its transformation into a democratic state, achieving independence from the Western empires and the Soviet Union, finally to redefine itself after the failure of the "Great Idea."

Turkey is a new country in an old land. The creation of the new republic (1923) in the heartland of the old Ottoman Empire was achieved in the face of internal traditionalist opposition and foreign intervention. Atatürk's goal was to build on the ruins of Ottoman Turkey a new country and society patterned directly on Western Europe. He equated westernization with the introduction of technology, cultural institutes, the modernization of administration, and the evolution of democratic institutions. Atatürk's state was an etatist dictatorship later his successor, İsmet İnönü introduced democratic elections and opened the political system to multiparty activity in 1946. In 1952, similarly to Greece Turkey also became the member of the NATO. After a brief interval of military rule, in 1961 a new, liberal constitution was adopted for the so-called Second Republic, and governance was given to civic hands. Thus Turkey had also three political problems: its transformation into a democratic and secular state with Islamic roots, and to redefine itself after the fall of the Ottoman Empire while being its heir.

### **Parallel biographies**

The life stories of the below studied two composers, Manolis Kalomiris and Cemal Resit Rey contain many common elements. They were the heads of their respective "National school", both composers had to establish the Western, symphonic culture in their

country, found national conservatories, symphonic orchestras, and both had to retell the national stories by means of opera, operetta and program music. Being the “fathers” of the modern Greek and Turkish classical music, they were supported and used by the actual political leaders irrespectively of their own intentions. In the following section their biographies are going to be compared. As a result the Hungarian reader can discover many common features with the life of Ferenc Erkel.

### *Manolis Kalomiris's biography (1883–1962)*<sup>7</sup>

Manolis Kalomiris was born in Smyrna in 1883 into a rich bourgeois family. He studied music first in Smyrna, Constantinople and Athens and completed his studies at the *Konservatorium für Musik und darstellende Kunst* of Vienna (1901–1906). From 1906 to 1910 he was teaching at the Obolensky School of Music in Kharkov, Ukraine, where he acquainted himself with the masterpieces of Russian music. In 1910 he settled permanently in Athens, which would be his “patria” for the rest of his life.

Returning from Austria and Russia his idea was to found the “Greek National School” similarly to the “New German School” which was created by the students and friends of Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner, or to the “Russian Fives” led by Rimsky-Korsakoff. His ideas and activity caused a lot of controversy in the musical and literary circles of Athens. Kalomiris was inimical to Italian music and the so-called Heptanesian composers (who used the traditional Greek folks songs and Byzantine hymns to their compositions), to expressionism and atonality.

To reach a high-level Greek national symphonic culture Kalomiris founded conservatoires, orchestras and opera ensembles. His pedagogical career started in 1911 as appointed professor of piano and theory at the Athens Conservatory. In 1919 he resigned from this job and founded the Hellenic Conservatory, finally in 1926 departed from the Hellenic Conservatory and founded the National Conservatory. A new branch of the Conservatory was founded in Alexandria, Egypt and Kalomiris became its Honorary Director. For the institutes he wrote manuals for theory, solfège, harmony and morphology.

His other aim was to elaborate the Greek philharmonic culture, so he founded orchestras: in 1920 the Hellenic Symphony Orchestra, in 1932 the National Symphony Orchestra, and finally, in 1942 the first permanent, state founded symphony orchestra of Greece (Athens State Orchestra), in cooperation with conductor Filoktitis Economides and with the authorities. As we can see between the 1920s and the 1950s, at the peak of his artistic creativity, Kalomiris became the pillar of Greek musical life.

His third goal was to recreate the Greek opera culture, so he founded the National Melodrama Society, headed the Greek National Opera as the two-thirds of the artists were students and graduates of his National Conservatory.

He died in Athens in 1962.

<sup>7</sup> Tsetsos, Markos: “Constantine Palaeologue”. In: Booklet of the CD “Constantine Palaeologue”. FORMIGX Concerts Company, 1997.



*Kalomiris' political attitude*<sup>8</sup>

Kalomiris' political attitude is closely connected to his relationship with the above mentioned "Great Idea". Kalomiris' views were formed by this patriotic political plan, but finally – together with the national leaders – he had to abandon it. His social-cultural-political activity represents his departure from the idea of the nation and his arrival to the society. His career deserves more precise research work, hereby the following facts are put in the highlight.

In 1918 Kalomiris was appointed inspector general of military musicians and in 1920, on the occasion of the liberation of Smyrna by the Greek army, his *Symphony of Valour* was interpreted in the Odeon of Herodes Atticus. In 1936 he was at the head of the band playing at the funeral of Eleftherios Venizelos (1864–1936) despite the current dictator, Metaxas' prohibition. This resulted in his dismissal from the Military Band. However, in 1938 he wrote a symphonic poem inspired by the famous novel *Good-for-nothing Minas* written by Kostis Bastias, Metaxas' cultural adviser par excellence.

Two years later, in 1940, his opera *The Mother's Ring* was produced in Berlin's Volksopera. During the German occupation he was accused of pro-Nazism by musical circles and he got life threats from the leftists of the period. Finally, he helped many communists find work as musicians and return from exile.

*Cemal Resit Rey's biography (1904–1985)*<sup>9</sup>

Cemal Resit Rey was born into one of the last Ottoman families on 25 October 1904, in Jerusalem. His father, Ahmet Resit Rey, was appointed as Governor, in Jerusalem. The family came to Istanbul, where he began to study piano at the age of five. Due to his father's political status the whole family was transported to Paris in 1913, where they had close ties – among others – with the French President of the time Raymond Poincaré.

Cemal Resit began his musical studies in the Parisian Conservatory with the support of Gabriel Faure. Ahmed Resit Rey and his family could not remain in Paris when the war broke out. Since they could not return to Turkey either, they settled in Geneva. Cemal Resit continued to study music at the Conservatory of Geneva. For a few months he visited the Istanbul Conservatory in 1919, but the level was so low, that he left for Paris. He studied Gabriel Faure's aesthetic lessons, and the technique of composing, conducting and playing piano.

In 1923 he arrived to Istanbul, the metropolis that remained for him the safe "patria" in his life. There Rey set out to found the institutions and the tradition of the classical music in the western sense. Before his activity there was not a classical symphony orchestra in Turkey. He had to educate the Turkish musicians for it. In the Conservatoire he started to teach piano at a very high level. Since 1926 he started to teach composition, thus all of the later composers were his disciples. In 1940 he was elected as the principal of the Conservatoire that Rey elevated into the western educational level.

<sup>8</sup> The summary is based on the text of Yannis Belonis in the booklet of the CD "Constantine Palaeologus". Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Yener, Faruk: Cemal Resit Rey – lexikon article. In: Stady, Stanley (ed.): *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Oxford University Press, 1980. Vol. 15. 782.

Rey was a conductor, as well. In 1926 he founded the first and only choir, which debuted in the same year. In 1934 some students were prepared enough to play in a string orchestra, so he founded the Istanbul Strings. Finally, the brass players were also prepared to play in an ensemble, thus he set up the Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra, which was led by him till 1968 as their chief conductor.

He organised the first public concert in Turkey in 1926, but he realised, that it is not enough to play classical music in Turkey: Turkish classical music has to be spread abroad as well, so he decided to be a guest conductor all over the world. This gifted, but in Turkey moderately celebrated musician started his world career in 1949. In the next twenty years he was a regular guest conductor at Vienna Philharmonics, French National Orchestra, Sancta Cecilia Symphony Orchestra, the Athens Philharmonics, and several Eastern European state Orchestras, e.g. in Warsaw, Sofia, Beograd.

Rey's last remarkable job was his cooperation with the Turkish State Radio in Ankara, where he served as chief of Western Music Publishing between 1938–1940. In 1940 he left for Istanbul, being tired of Ankara's dreary cultural ambience. In Istanbul he had another chance to cooperate with the State Radio, for two years he was the chief of Istanbul Radio Music Publishing. Later he decided to return to conducting.

In 1969 Rey became a retired professor and a conductor, and composed again with full energy. In the last year of his life his favourite operetta, the *Life of Lükös* was renewed in Istanbul. He visited its début and died on the following day (1985).

### *Resit Rey's political attitude*<sup>10</sup>

Cemal Resit Rey was the member of the Ottoman emperor dynasty, his father, the governor of Jerusalem later became a diplomat. Resit Rey did not go home in the time of the First World War, he remained with his mother in Geneva. In 1920 he tried to live in Istanbul but soon he left for Paris. After Atatürk's coup Rey settled in Istanbul, but his ambiguous relationship with both the old and the new regimes is clearly recognizable.

His first remarkable opera was written for a French libretto about Sultan Cem, the strange and tragic hero of the Ottoman history. This poet sultan ruled the empire only for a few days till his brother Bayezid II expelled him from Turkey. The Ottoman composer's opera dedicated to the Ottoman poet ruler was not performed in Istanbul, only once in Paris (1924). Resit's next political step was to take part in the competition organised for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Republic. Resit composed a heroic, patriotic song, an anthem for Turkey, but the jury declared it too sad. Their problem was the minor chord in the finale – they found it similar to the Funeral march of the *Eroica Symphony*.

Finally, in 1953, in the year of the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of Constantinople Resit composed a powerful symphonic poem (*Fatih Sultan Mehmet*) about the siege and the conqueror. Surprisingly there was no record of the composition, neither a performance. However it should be noted that in the piece Sultan Mehmet is struggling with doubts most of the time, and the fall of the wall is represented by glissando which gives irony to the elevation.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.forumturka.net/forum/biyografiler/374172-cemal-resid-rey.html>

Cemal Resit Rey, the composer number one of the new Turkish republic was deeply associated with the great Ottoman sultans. He lived almost his all life in Istanbul, and avoided Ankara. His apolitical behaviour represents partly the attitude of the artist intelligentsia, partly his inability to take part in the post-Ottoman politics. Rey's some works represent truly and very critically the Ottoman history – without any significant reception in his country.

### **Parallel compositions about the fall of Constantinople**

For both composers the music about Constantinople is pure “ars musica”. For Cemal Resit Rey the conqueror sultan was an idealised ancestor, a poet and warrior at the same time. For Kalomiris the fall of the City provided opportunity to confess his disillusionment in the “Great Idea” and his arrival to the contemporary Greek social reality. The two compositions are really brilliant, but they were not received as well as they merited. These could be too complicated, too critical or too sophisticated for the popular perceptions or political usage.

#### *Cemal Resit Rey's note about his symphonic poem*

It was in Madrid in 1953 that Cemal Resid Rey, hearing the church bells arrived to the conclusion that it would be a remembrance of the seizure of Constantinople. He sat down immediately and wrote what was to become the main theme of the symphonic poem.

“This piece, inspired by such an important event aims in its initial phases and by the use of two contrasting musical ideas, to express the twin aspect of the personality of the warrior-poet, to show his fears and doubts about the battle, his trust in his soldiers and to echo his fervent prayers. The poem continues with sudden imperious signal for the attack, the quick episode of the battle itself, the collapse of the walls through which the victorious army enters the conquered City, led by the music of the Janissaries.

Instead of the blood-thirsty monster living in the European imagination, the sultan emerges as a poet. His thoughts and feelings are projected by a violin solo, seeking to express the sublime words of peace, the respect for humankind and their beliefs, his hope in a universal understanding free of religious prejudice or sectarian divisions.

To this a Muslim hymn answers, the voice of victorious men grateful to God for his blessings timid at first but increasingly sonorous. The music of Christian bells echoes joy to glorify that day, bear witness to the superbly humanitarian gestures of the Conqueror.”<sup>11</sup>

#### *Rey's artistic interpretation of the fall*

In 1953 Rey decided to compose again after a long silence since 1942 (the year of the death of his beloved brother and librettist). In 1953 he composed a symphonic cycle: two dark symphonic poems and an ironic piano concerto. The first composition of that year was

<sup>11</sup> Cemal Resid Rey: Preface to the Fatih Sultan Mehmet. In: Cemal Resid Rey: *Le Conquérant*. Hungaroton, Booklet, 1989. 3–4.

his gloomiest symphonic poem "Appeal to the Death" based on an old Turkish tale "Çağrılış". About Death, who is not looking for a country or a person, "he" is an indispensable part of life and wherever he goes people ask for him. The second piece from 1953 is a symphonic poem about Sultan Mehmet. Finally, his last composition from the same year, the piano concerto "*Katibim*" dedicated to the city of Istanbul is a variation on an old Turkish folk song. The original song (*Katibim*) tells the story of a clerk winning the beautiful Üsküdar's hand. However as Üsküdar loses her appeal as time goes by, the clerk's victory fades. Rey's "dark" trilogy depicts decadence, death and suffering as integral parts of human life.

If we add to these symbolic elements, that Rey usually stayed abroad most part of every year since 1949 as a guest conductor – we can suspect some desire to get out of the country. Personal, artistic and political troubles could worry him – and these concerns set the real background for his controversial portrayal of his idealised ancestor: Fatih Sultan Mehmet.

The plot of the symphonic poem – as mentioned by the author's words above – is a simple story: the sultan leads his army against the walls of Constantinople, suddenly he faces doubts because of the brutality of the combat, finally he re-enforces himself and the army. When the troops occupy the city, he is worried about the inhabitants; finally he enters the capital and ensures amnesty to everybody. In Rey's view this was the only solution for Sultan Mehmet to make piece with his conscience. In the reality the amnesty was declared only on the third night of the slaughter.

For a better understanding of this music we could compare it with Shostakovich's symphonies. The siege part of Rey's music can evoke Shostakovich's *Leningrad symphony*, while the anguish of the sultan in some way recalls the parody tunes of part 2 of Shostakovich's *LX<sup>th</sup> symphony*. The artistic enigmas (metaphors), the political overtones and the historical descriptions are similar. Considering these elements we can grasp the message of Rey's music.

The falsified historical story does not make the symphonic poem neither a triumph march, nor a heroic musical statue for the Conqueror. Above the personal association and the political surface the piece is written with the aim of conveying "hope in a universal understanding free of religious prejudice or sectarian divisions". That is why the chime of bells is so important both symbolically and melodically. The religious symbols echo the events of the secular world as the bells announce the victory of Mehmet II.

Rey's symphonic opus of 1953 discloses a stoic sense of *ars musica*. As it is mentioned, the symphonic poem of Sultan Mehmet is the second part of a triptych, thus it can be interpreted in view of the other two pieces. Sultan Mehmet the ruler needs victory, the spreading empire needs a new capital, so the poet-emperor has to be a warrior and a butcher in order to realise these aspirations. But as we know from the *Katibim*, every victory lasts three days.

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To understand the poor reception of this brilliant piece (or that of whole trilogy), it is enough to focus only on his above cited introduction stressing the merits of being secular and free of prejudice or divisions. The symphonic poem was to be performed in Paris in 1953, but Resit Rey and withdrew from the French National Orchestra. In 1958 he could

take the risk of the performance, and the same orchestra played it in Paris. There is no information about its reception in France and Turkey, but it has to be mentioned that its first recording was made in Budapest by the Hungarian State Orchestra in the studio of the Hungaroton in 1988. Cemal Resit Rey nowadays is very famous in Turkey, the national cultural palace bears his name, but this piece is missing from the repertoire of the symphonic orchestras founded by him...

It is nevertheless ironic that the chime of bell sounds throughout the Christian world at noon does not commemorate the siege of Constantinople but the victory of János Hunyadi against sultan Mehmet II in the battle for Nándorfehérvár (today: Beograd). Thus the work stresses one of the biggest failures of the Ottoman historiography. It is also ironical, that the Hungaroton did not add a note about the falsified historical data (of the bells and amnesty).

### *Kalomiris notes about his opera*

Kalomiris planned to compose the opera since 1953, but he started the work in 1957 and finished in 1961. He recalls his memories of this period in the following sentences: "In 1953 Kazantzakis gave me an issue of "Nea Estia" containing the text of the tragedy *Constantine Palaeologus*. As I had begun my lyrical work with an early passionate work by Kazantzakis, so should I finish it with his latest dramatic national masterpiece. I remember reading *Constantine Palaeologus*, it had pervaded by spirit. I couldn't hold back my tears. I felt I had to translate my emotions into sounds and rhythms, while on the other hand I felt daunted by the sheer greatness of the task.

Four years went by until some time in April 1957 I found myself lying in a hospital bed. As I was fighting for my life, the image of my granddaughter Charoula and the vision of Constantine Palaeologus strengthened my will to continue living.

And I lived. Right after convalescence I was able to concentrate and work again creatively, so I made up my mind. I would translate the emotion I had felt when reading Constantine Palaeologus into sounds and rhythms. I would devote whatever power had been left in me to singing it...

Today, inspecting the work of my hands, I believe I have the right to be proud... I do believe that with the work I invested in *Palaeologus*, more than in any other work of mine..., I opened a new page in the history of Greek art! And this not because of the way I treated Byzantine modes and psalms, but because I showed that here, in a musical Greece swept by different kinds of winds and doubts, I remain true to my artistic ideals, my spiritual gods, my Faith in the Greek Musical Idea."<sup>12</sup>

### *The Plot of the "Palaeologus"*

In the first act (*Byzantium. Square in front of the palace*) people are praying to God and to the Virgin, protectress of the Greeks, to relieve the city from the siege. Notaras, the Grand Duke claims that God has cursed the city because of the King's alliance with the Franks. The Firewalker, a nihilist is also prophesying disaster and the fall of the city. The act finishes in a mass, where Firewalker predicts the immanent death.

<sup>12</sup> Manolis Kalomiris: Preface to the first edition of the score of *Constantine Palaeologus*. 1961.

In the second act Constantine appears with his Frankish friends and other noblemen. They all say farewell to him and go to battle. The “mothers of the city” come and plead him to make peace saying: “The City will be lost. Make peace, your Excellency, so that our sons will not be lost as well.”

Constantine’s lover, Anna pleads him to run away together. He refuses, because his supreme duty forces him to stay. Anna declares that she will stay with him till the tragic end. Charkoutsis, a Cretan captain, and his men fight and give their lives “for the honour” of the city.

The Abbot of Hagia Sophia asks Constantine to hand over the crown claiming that this is the wish of the Virgin. Constantine, however, amidst sudden lightning which makes the people believe that the Virgin is present, convinces the abbot that their duty is to fight.

In the third act an interrupted mass takes place. Charkoutsis, wounded, comes in and announces the heroic death of Constantine. Finally, the voice of the abbot pervades the wailing of the crowd. He urges the people to raise their souls to God saying “Many years will pass but *in the end the city will be ours again*.” The gates of Hagia Sophia open up and the Turks rush into the church.

### *Kalomiris’ artistic interpretation of the fall*

Rey uses the victory of 1453 over the Byzantines as a symbol for that of the laic Turkey over the fundamentalism, while Kalomiris interprets the fall as the birth of the brand new Greece.

To catch the message of the Kalomiris-opera first we have to analyse its artistic devices. As it is proper to a national opera in its melody we can recognize all the elements of the “Greek National School”: the Wagnerian dramaturgy, the Rimsky-Korsakoffian melodicality, and some Byzantine chant as well. Kalomiris regarded *Palaeologus* as his topmost musical achievement and was fully conscious of his artistic goal: “To combine Western Music with Byzantine chants and modes into a unified artistic whole, which, I think, has never been attempted before to such an extent in Greek musical creation.”<sup>13</sup>

Allusions to Stravinsky, especially to the oratorio-opera *Rex Oedipus determine the sonority of Kalomiris’ piece*. Although he avoided any reference to the ancient Hellas, the sonority of *Rex Oedipus* may have been important for him because of the centrality of the fate-motif in both pieces. Furthermore we can consider some influence of D. Shostakovich, especially in the usage of the major triad for Constantine, Anna and the Holy Virgin. All the other characters are depicted by atonal music. In the world chaotic atonality prevails – only the real heroes can elevate themselves into the harmonic tonal registers.

Kalomiris’ opera is based on the mammoth-ensemble of the *Fall of the Gods* (*Die Götterdämmerung*) by Richard Wagner. The Wagnerian instrumentation represents Kalomiris’ aim: to tell the story of the fall of Constantinople, the earthly “Walhalla”. As he summarised in a letter: “The fall of the City, an unexpected loss, brings to the foreground the problem of the identity of the Greeks, who feel threatened by East and West [...]. As a

<sup>13</sup> Tsetsos, *Constantine Palaeologus*. Ibid.

cultural component, this double threat leads to an ideological sublimation and craving for cultural isolation as a source of power for facing destiny.”<sup>14</sup>

The symbolic gods of the late Byzantium were the two protagonists, the emperor Constantine and his lover, Anna whose leitmotif after her death is used for a chant to the Divine Protectress. Constantine and Anna are free as the gods since they know no fear, neither hope. They are manifestations of the Nietzschean “supermen” who freely and not through externally imposed values. The historical event of the fall of Byzantium becomes a symbol of the present “Nietzschean” decadence, from which new values and new ideals can emerge. The issue here is the renaissance of the Greek nation. As Kalomiris said, “even when you see your dreams in ruins, desperation itself becomes a regenerative power”.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the audience gets convinced that the new Greece can rise up from the martyrs of Constantinople. Exceeding himself Kalomiris – a spokesman for the idea of the Greek nation while ignoring the Greek “volkisch” culture – elevated the Greek people into the level of martyrdom in his *magnum opus*. In the first and second acts the protagonists of his composition are the civilians, the abandoned mob of Byzantine streets. They shout, cry, claim for bread, peace or fight, they are manipulated by all political leaders (the abbot, the grand duke, the military commanders) – and they obey everybody except their ruler. This plot was repeated in the contemporary Greek history in Kalomiris’ life: the list contains three dethronements, seven *coups d’État*, three dictatorships, two civil wars and one occupation. Thus the people of the Nietzschean decadence deserved Kalomiris’ strong criticism.

Thus in the third act Kalomiris transforms the people of the new Greece into heroes, martyrs or proper victims. When the “superhuman” (Constantine and Anna) sacrificed themselves, the mob becomes a nation as they gather in the Hagia Sophia. This newborn nation attends the last mass, the requiem for Byzantium, and elevated into the height of the Walhalla. Sitting silently in the rows they become similar to the *Götterdämmerung*’s divine council waiting for the end of the their world.

Kalomiris buries the “Great Idea”, the imagined but not existing idealistic nation. He decided to create the real society of the modern Greece by artistic means – as much as they are ready to face their destiny. In Kalomiris’ opera they dared – consequently they could be martyrs for the honour of the later nation.

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In 1962 the full opera was performed by the Greek National Opera on the Athens Festival. A year later the finale of the third act was presented in Munich by the Orchestra and Choir of the Bavarian Radio conducted by Milan Horvard. In 1971, the Greek National Opera repeated the performance in Thessaloniki. Then the work vanished from the modern repertoire until it was resurfaced in as late as 1997, in Thessaloniki on a festival. That time the music was recorded by the Robert Schumann German Philharmonic Orchestra, the Choir of Thessaloniki, the children’s choir of the Thessaloniki College and various soloists.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

In 2001, *Palaeologus* was presented in Athens by the Athens Festival with almost the same casting.<sup>16</sup>

Did the *Palaeologus* arrive to the Greeks? Are they the nation Kalomiris dreamt of? The opera is available on CD's, but it is not on repertoire. As the abbot in Constantinople waits for the liberation of the city, Kalomiris's opera is still waiting for the time when its story will have been only history.

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<sup>16</sup> Svolos, Yannis: "Stage Productions of Constantine Palaeologus." In: Booklet of the CD "Constantine Palaeolgus", Ibid.



## Summary

The fall of Constantinople became inherent part of the Greek and Turkish national mythologies. The Turkish Cemal Resit Rey's composition from 1953 by a symphonic poem *Fatih Sultan Mehmet*, that stresses – on the one hand – the victory of a secular European state which – on the other hand – has still doubts of its national identity.

The Greek Manolis Kalomiris' opera *Constantine Palaeologus*, composed between 1958 and 1961 demonstrates the birth of the Greek nation.

The list containing all the works that deal with the fall of Constantinople can be very long. I am picking up only a Hungarian piece: Emil Ábrányi's *Byzantium* composed from a play by Ferenc Herczegh. Herczegh's drama – written in 1904 on the eve of the World War I – was interpreted in Hungary – even by the contemporary prime minister – as a prophecy of the coming fall of Hungary. Ábrányi composed his opera in 1942, when the next tragedy has already started. The plot of the opera is similar to Kalomiris' – the only important difference is that except for the emperor and his love the people of Byzantium deserved the fall: "Everything is for sale" – sings a friend of the emperor cynically. Shall we be surprised that this opera has not been performed so far?



## *Colonization of Western Sahara*

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In this article, I'd like to write a short analysis about the colonization of Western Sahara because as a candidate for a doctor's degree, I'm making some research about the UN peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO). I think, that we have to see a global picture when we make a research about any peace keeping, peace support or peace enforcement mission, because without the background of the conflict, we can't get a correct view.

Up till now altogether – including me – 20 Hungarian officers and approximately this many police officers have served in the mission. Maybe that is why, and also due to the lack of concrete Hungarian interests the Hungarian Defence Forces have relatively few information on this territory and the developments here. Nowadays, a small Hungarian contingent (7 people) serves in MINURSO. However, nobody made any analysis about the Western Sahara case till today. Only I made some small articles in various newspapers previously. For this reason I chose this theme to make a dissertation about MINURSO and the Western Sahara case. In Western Sahara, there is a long time clash between the real inhabitants of the land (named Sahrawians) and the newcomers from Morocco. Unfortunately, it is not so easy to understand the conflict, if we don't know the history of this land, especially about the Spanish colonization and their role in this conflict. Hopefully, this article will give some idea for the readers about this matter. But first I'd like to share some basic information about Western Sahara.

### **Geographical features, climate**

The area lies in North Africa, on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. It is bordered by Morocco in the north, Algeria in the east (they have 42 kilometers of common boundary) and Mauritania from the east and south. Its area is 266,000 square kilometers. Just like in most African countries, the borders were marked out by the colonial powers by ratifying different treaties, agreements. The borders of Western Sahara were regulated and marked out by the agreements signed by Spain and France in 1900, 1904 and 1912.<sup>1</sup>

Its lowland area is plain, sandy and rocky, with a few hills in the southern and north-eastern parts. These hills are at an altitude of not more than 400 meters.<sup>2</sup> Its lowest point is

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<sup>1</sup> Erik Jensen: *Western Sahara. Anatomy of a Stalemate*. 24.

<sup>2</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 19–23.

Sebjet Tah, 55 meters below sea-level, while the highest is a 721 meter high hill, which has no official name.

Western Sahara can be divided into three main regions.

The north-eastern zone is a rocky desert (*hamadas*) spreading from the chains of the Atlas mountain to the Zemmour mountains. Mountain chains of volcanic origin of different sizes and unique hanging rocks can be found here. Water is scarce in the area, there are only few scattered wells. Despite the relative lack of water, many species of plants and animals live in the area.

The second zone is called the area of the river by the locals because temporary rivers run through it. It is bordered by the Draa valley from the north, and the valley of the Jat river from the west. The water gathers in these valleys during the short rainy seasons in the autumn. Due to the very high temperatures, water evaporates very quickly, so it never reaches the Atlantic.<sup>3</sup>

The Saguia el-Hamra (the Red River) can be found in the "river-zone". The importance of this particular river is revealed in the fact that the region was named after it. Vegetation suitable for grazing is significant on the banks of the rivers and near Smara. The local inhabitants also grow barley and other crops. The flora and fauna are a bit more versatile here than in the rocky territory called hamadas. Oases of different size offer some additional colours to the scenery. The size of the oases can vary from a few hundred square metres up to the size of a smaller village.

The third zone is called the Rio de Oro. This is an extremely plain area, interspersed with sand dunes. Due to its composition, the soil is unable to hold and store water, so the water gathers in the sub-soil, which makes it possible to dig wells in such areas.<sup>4</sup>

The monotony of the area is broken by the Dakhla Peninsula (formerly: Villa Cisneros) and the La Guerra. The desert here includes the coastline of Western Sahara (1,100 kms) and Mauritania (754 kms). Rainfall is very low but due to the humid air arriving from the ocean, conditions are favourable for a lot of plant and animal species and the migratory birds arriving from Europe, which spend the winter here.<sup>5</sup>

Around the coastline, apart from a few minor settlements, there are no living habitations. The majority of the people there earn for a living as fishermen or by raising camels. Their number increases with the approximately 160,000 Moroccan fishermen, who work on the coastline temporarily in the summer and early autumn.<sup>6</sup>

Although I have not included it in any of the zones, there is a special desert environment: the area of the salty lakes (Saharan halophytics). This type of area is located around Bir Lahlou and the Mehaires patrol route in Mauritania. Places like this are called *chott* by the Arabs and some of the local nomads gain salt there which is so important for them.

The climate of the Sahara is continental; the winters are cold and dry, while the summers are extremely hot. The temperature can rise above 50 degrees in the shade. Due to the proximity of the ocean, the humidity is relatively high so the weather is humid and

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 25–27.

<sup>4</sup> János Besenyő: *Western Sahara*. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Mephram – R. H. Hughes: *A Directory of African Wetlands*. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Mohammed Baddyr – Sylvie Guenette: *The Fisheries off the Atlantic Coast of Morocco 1950–1997*. [http://www.seaaroundus.org/report/datasets/Morocco\\_Baddyr1.pdf](http://www.seaaroundus.org/report/datasets/Morocco_Baddyr1.pdf) (downloaded: 08.12.2010.)

foggy. The average rainfall is merely 45 mms, even in Dakhla, which lies on the ocean shore.<sup>7</sup>

Wind is a major problem all over the territory of the Sahara as it carries the sand particles. It can cause skin irritation or inflammation of the eye. Thus, the locals always cover their head and face with a scarf. The most unpleasant of these winds is the windstorm called 'Irifi', which can cause a sandstorm merely by its strength. The wind arriving from the north-east is called 'Sirocco' by the Europeans. The Sirocco is extremely dry and hot and covers everything with sand. Visibility becomes extremely limited; it is reduced to 1 or 2 metres. The storms occur between October and March, but sometimes in the summer, though, not very frequently.<sup>8</sup>

## People

The Sahrawian social structure is similar to that of the other nomadic or partially-settled tribes living in the Sahara. The most fundamental agency of society is the family. Families in blood relation constitute a tribe (Fakhd or gabila), the leader of which has special rights in organising and directing the life of his tribe.<sup>9</sup> The leading position (sheikh) is mostly hereditary, passing from father to son, while members of the family or the tribe belong to different classes on the basis of their birth or occupation. It is possible to pass from one class to another based on individual talent but it happens very rarely. However, marriage between a man and a woman coming from different classes is practically impossible.<sup>10</sup>

Sahrawian men consider their pipe as a status symbol. They are made of several different metals, but all men strive to have one of silver.

Locals constitute more than twenty major tribes, which can be divided into three main groups: Ouled Delim, Reguibat and Tekna. Beside these there were minor tribes in occasional alliance or at occasional wars with each other. Though maintaining a rather loose relationship with each other these tribes had substantial autonomy on their own territories.<sup>11</sup>

The Sahrawian tribes are not all of Arabic origin as the Arabic tribes occupying the region mixed with local Berber tribes. Nevertheless, there remained some relatively clean blooded Berber tribes like the majority of the Reguibat tribal union, originating from the Sanhaja Berbers, who occupied the region before the Arab conquest. Later they accepted groups of Arabic descent, but Berber traditions are exceptionally strong both in their language and in their culture.<sup>12</sup>

The descendants of the Makuil tribe (Beni Hassan tribe) and tribes like Ouled Delim, Ouled Arousien and Ouled Bou Sba arriving from the area of present-day Yemen in the 13th century are among the clean-blooded Arab tribes.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Mephram – R. H. Hughes: *Ibid.* 87.

<sup>8</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 14.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Lawles – Laila Monahan: *War and Refugees. The Western Sahara Conflict.* 32.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Hart: *The social structure of the Rgibat Bedouins of the Western Sahara.* 517.

<sup>11</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 27.

<sup>12</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Tribes of the Sahara.* 231–232.

Tribes of Arab origin are very proud of their roots and clean blood. For example, the members of the Ouled Delim tribe can trace back their origin as far as Delim, the son of the supposed founder of the Beni Hassan tribe. They are the most populous tribe in Western Sahara and they consider themselves the cleanest blooded Arabs in the Sahel region.

The tribes and the different unions were organised on a regional basis, therefore most tribes of the Sahara still live and migrate with their animals within the same area to the present day. The territories of the clean-blooded Arab tribes were referred to as the land of the whites i.e. "*Trab el-Beidan*" although this area was further divided into smaller regions.<sup>13</sup> The most famous of these was the "*Sahel*" which was later completely occupied by the Spanish, who called the natives Ahel el-Sahel i.e. "the people of the Sahel" after the name of the region.<sup>14</sup>

Having examined the regional aspects of the Sahrawians it is also interesting to look at the typical occupations they pursued.

Some tribes were mainly soldiers and in return for their armed assistance smaller tribes paid a kind of tax (*debiha*). These tribes provided armed escort for the caravans, though in case a rival tribe was commissioned to do the task they would attack and attempt to rob the traders not employing them. These tribes were known as "the people of arms".<sup>15</sup> Tribes of this category were the following: Reguibat Sarg, Reguibat Sahel, Izarguien, Ait Lahsen, Arosien, Oulad Delim, Yagout, Ait Musa Oulad Ali, Azouafit, Ait Usa and Oulad Bou Sbaa.

Tribes that were conquered or forced to pay tax had the common name (*znaga* or sometimes *lahma*) and although they were not slaves they had a very similar status to the Helotes in the military state of Sparta. Stronger tribes would often attack and rob the *znaga* tribes with the pretext of a military exercise in order to practise their fighting skills and weapons handling. The word *znaga* comes from the Sanhaja Berbers and it denoted the Berber ruling class before the Arabs. The meaning of the word was slightly modified in the 15th and 16th centuries and the Spanish used it for the non-Arabic, but Berber origin nomads who did not adopt the Hassania dialect, but preserved their mother tongue. Later the word lost its ethnic meaning and was only used in connection with tribes that had the status of slaves or that were tax payers.<sup>16</sup>

People of *znaga* status were neither allowed to carry weapons officially in the presence of members of superior tribes, nor to sit in the middle among their guests in their own tents. This was a very serious offence among the people of the Sahara. Subordinate tribes would often pay for the protection with animals or forced labour (*horma*).<sup>17</sup> Mostly the smaller tribes living along the coastline belonged to the *znaga*, like: Foicat, Imeraguen, Le Menasir, Meyat, Lamiar, Oulad Bou Aita, Oulad Abdeluahed and Ouled Tidrarin.

Some tribes whose members studied the Qur'an all their lives and worked as teachers of the religion were referred to as "*zuaias*". Members of these tribes were called "people of the book" (*as ahel ktub*). These tribes had high esteem and possessed deep respect. Nevertheless, stronger tribes made attempts to suppress them from time to time. That

<sup>13</sup> Richard Lawles – Laila Monahan: *Ibid.* 33.

<sup>14</sup> Tony Hodges: *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*. 9–11.

<sup>15</sup> John Mercer: *Ibid.* 126.

<sup>16</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 30.

<sup>17</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Ibid.* 216.

happened to the Ouled Tidrarin tribe, which after several years of desperate fight became tax payer of the Ouled Delim tribe in the 18th century, thereby losing their position among the religious tribes became znaga.<sup>18</sup> Ahel Berical<sup>19</sup> and Tendega belong to the "zuaia" but there are some tribes along the coast which are also members of this group, like Kenta and Terquez.<sup>20</sup>

In order to avoid the taxpaying status some tribes tried to prove their Arabic descent, therefore, they would manipulate their family trees to get the honorable "chorfa" status (descendant of the Prophet). This, of course, led to a boom in the industry of pedigree forging, which used to be fashionable in Hungary, too (i.e. proving non-existing nobility or sheepskin). The following belong to the Chorfa tribes: Reguibat Sarg, Reguibat Sahel, Arosien, Oulad Bou Sbaa, Ahel Sheikh Ma El Ajnin, Filala and Toubalt.

The tribes of Arabic origin (descendants of the Beni Hassan tribe) had the status of free fighters which meant the highest level in the traditionally weapon-using Sahrawian society. Although they also mixed with Berber tribes during their history, they are still regarded as clean-blooded Arab tribes. They are the following: Oulad Delim, Tekna, Escarna, Oulad Gailan, Oulad Lab and Chenagla.

Members of the Tekna tribe live mainly in South Morocco, in an area spreading from the Anti-Atlas Mountain to Saguia el Hamra. They consider themselves descendants of the Lemtula (Berber) tribe and the Makuils.

Because of the latter they are also listed among the clean-blooded Arabs. The Lemtula tribe had already lived in the Oued Noun region, which later became the centre of the Tekna tribal union, by the time of the arrival of the first Makuil groups (1218). The tribe following a nearly two-century fight finally assimilated into a group of the Beni Hassan thereby forming a new tribal union named Tekna.<sup>21</sup>

During the centuries the tribal union was divided into two opposing groups, Ait Yemel "El Gazzi" and Ait Atzman (Ait Bella).

The tribes introduced above present only a relatively narrow cross-section of the Sahrawian tribes. There are approximately 120 minor and major tribes in the region of the Western Sahara, which are related to each other live separately though.<sup>22</sup>

Beside the tribal leaders who represented the executive power there was an advisory council called Djemma which was made up of the delegates of various tribes. This council was dissolved without a trace with the creation of the Polisario.

At war time a war council was established in order to fend off external threat. When the community was divided by internal conflicts like the more than thirty-year-long war between the tribes of Reguibat and Tadjakent,<sup>23</sup> or the disputes about the use of wells, the Council of Fourty (Ait Arbajn) was established.<sup>24</sup> This organization, which none of the neighbouring countries ever employed or even was aware of, always had a job to do

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 212–13.

<sup>19</sup> James Stuart Olson: *The Peoples of Africa. An Ethnohistorical Dictionary.* 15.

<sup>20</sup> Tony Hodges: *Ibid.* 9–10.

<sup>21</sup> John Mercer: *The Sahrawis of Western Sahara.* 5.

<sup>22</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 34.

<sup>23</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Ibid.* 82.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 81–82., 219.

because the tribes were very likely to solve their disputes with the use of weapons, and also stronger tribes liked looting smaller and weaker ones.<sup>25</sup>

Another specific office that the Sahrawians had was one which we today would call an ambassador (*kafir*). It was a person delegated and authorized by the tribes to officially represent them at the neighbouring tribes.

It is interesting to know that the women of Western Sahara as opposed to the tradition of the neighbouring countries take part in the work in several ways. For example, in Mauritania it would be impossible for a woman to milk the animals while among the Sahrawian people it is a woman's job. Nowadays, women have a very important role in society because the number of men living in the refugee camps is very small. As a result, they have to do jobs which were considered to be men's responsibility earlier.<sup>26</sup>

To this day camels have a very high value for the locals. The possession of a camel is a kind of status symbol in society. Even though the number of nomads have decreased considerably there are still Sahrawians possessing herds of several hundred animals. The price of a camel is nearly 10-12,000 dirham (USD 1,000-1,200), and it still happens that on signing the marriage contract the negotiated "price" of the bride is paid in camels.<sup>27</sup>

The Sahrawians are proud of their origin and although they still keep in evidence where they come from, the tribal ties are much looser today especially among town dwellers and also because of the different ways of living they lead. This is due to the fact that the Moroccans forced the majority of the Sahrawians who had led a nomadic life for centuries to settle down in cities.

Although the majority of the Sahrawians have settled down in the towns with the lack of stable job opportunities they just increase the number of those who live on social aids. When the locals made a living from shepherding and trade the number of able-bodied men receiving social aid was minimal, while today the majority of men living in towns are unemployed. Extensive unemployment soon results in a state where unemployment is accepted and work and the old way of life devalue. As a result, people living on social aid become more vulnerable (financially and politically) since they are unable to keep themselves up without social support.

Sahrawians speak the Hassaniya dialect of Arabic, but since the occupation of the region they have mostly used the Moroccan Arab dialect.<sup>28</sup> A lot of them also use Spanish, the language of the former colonists, and thanks to state education the number of French speakers has considerably increased recently.<sup>29</sup>

The majority of the population is Sunni but there are some Shiites and some Christians (mostly Catholic) among them. Sahrawians are characterized by a high degree of religious tolerance both within and outside their communities.

The estimated population of the Sahrawians living under Moroccan rule is 90,000, but there are about 120,000 refugees in Algerian camps (Tindouf) and an additional 30-40,000

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<sup>25</sup> Mark Hart: *Ibid.* 515-527.

<sup>26</sup> John Mercer: Spanish Sahara. 162.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Hart: *Ibid.* 515-527.

<sup>28</sup> Eric L. Wolf: *Európa és a történelem nélküli népek.* 54-55.

<sup>29</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 36.



abroad in different countries. However, Polisario leaders think, if they gain their independence and all Sahrawians return home, at least there could be 750,000 inhabitants.<sup>30</sup>

## Economy

According to the latest research findings, Western Sahara is extremely rich in minerals, particularly in phosphate, iron ore, uranium, titanium, natural gas and oil.<sup>31</sup> Some geologists say that vanadium is also abundant in this territory enough to consider its mining, which then would result in high profit.<sup>32</sup> The Spanish found oil already in the 1960s, however, they did not attempt to launch offshore drilling due to the underdevelopment of the area in economic terms.<sup>33</sup>

Under the seafloor of coastal waters several American and French companies (Kerr-McGee and Total Fina Elf) conducted oil research and their findings indicate rich reserves off the coasts of Western Sahara.<sup>34</sup> However, oil production was impossible to launch because of the objections of the Polisario and several other organizations. Companies hope for settling the problems related to the disputed territories and plan to start oil production only afterwards. Europe holds interests in Western Sahara through SADR covering almost 80,000 km<sup>2</sup> of exciting exploration acreage. The Tindouf licence has great potential for both conventional and unconventional gas resources, being geologically similar to the prolific Algerian Palaeozoic basins. The Aiuun Basin is an Atlantic margin basin similar to that developed along the West African margin. Until the political situation is resolved in Western Sahara, these licences remain in *force majeure*.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, the coastal waters comprise one of the richest fish areas in the world and fishing right is also disputed by the opposing parties.<sup>36</sup> Spanish and Moroccan ships were confiscated by Polisario guerrillas several times when those had no license from them. When in December 2002 a tanker sank at the Spanish coast a lot of Spanish fishermen lost their jobs due to water pollution. Both the Moroccan Government and the Polisario proposed the fishermen to use the territorial waters for fishing. Moroccans also have major revenues from fishing and processing sea fish.<sup>37</sup>

Naturally, it is not only Moroccan fishermen who do fishing in these waters as both the European Union and other countries lobby in Morocco for licences of fishing in the region.<sup>38</sup> Exercising fishing rights is a delicate issue and triggered several conflicts between Moroccan authorities and ships under foreign flags.

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<sup>30</sup> Toby Shelley: *Endgame in the Western Sahara*. 86–88.

<sup>31</sup> Claes Olsson: *The Western Sahara Conflict. The Role of Natural Resources in Decolonization*. 20.

<sup>32</sup> Toby Shelley: *Ibid.* 77–78.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Lawles–Laila Monahan: *Ibid.* 36.

<sup>34</sup> Claes Olson: *Ibid.* 18.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.europaoil.com/operations/western-sahara.aspx> (downloaded: 08.12.2010.)

<sup>36</sup> Richard Lawles – Laila Monahan: *Ibid.* 71.

<sup>37</sup> Mohammed Baddyr – Sylvie Guenette: *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> F. Ugboaja Ohaegbulam: *Ethnical Issues in U.S. Policy on the Western Sahara Conflict*. 99.

Agriculture in the area is minimal: arable lands and oases, where fruit (dates) and some vegetable production is dominant, makes up a mere 5% of total production. Another 19% of the region is suitable for pasturage of camels, sheep and goats, done mainly by nomads.<sup>39</sup>

Yet another significant part of the population is involved in handcraft and home industry. Using semi-precious stones and remains of stones of animals beautiful jewellery is made which is sold mainly to tourists. Silverworks and leather-craft are also traditional trades. Although living standards in the occupied territories are well below the Moroccan average, still, it is higher than of people in Polisario-controlled territories. Nowadays, tourism began to develop, however, due to the unsettled status quo organised tourism industry could emerge only in the territories occupied by Morocco. Nevertheless, some "adventurers" take the risk to venture into the so called "free territories".<sup>40</sup>

The majority of foreign investors come from France and Spain because both historic and economic relations between firms from these European countries and Western Sahara remained.

In accordance with the provisions of the current ceasefire agreement, and decision of the United Nations, Morocco is not allowed to build roads or exploit the natural resources of the country until the final settlement of the status quo.<sup>41</sup> This provision of the agreement is, however, frequently ignored, for example in the Guerguerat region near the Mauritanian border a road was built with the involvement of the armed forces and the construction of fishing villages is also in progress along the Western Sahara coastline.<sup>42</sup> To date 6 such villages had been built, and in the 2002 regional budget resources for another 6 settlements were earmarked.

The reason is that in the seas rich in fish some 140,000 Moroccan fishermen work temporarily who stay on the Western Sahara coast during the fishing season as they are unable to make a living in Morocco.<sup>43</sup> In spite of their merely USD 7-a-day wage they support their families in Morocco. Besides the existing fish processing factories (Layoune and Dakhla) operating at full capacity further factories are planned to be built.<sup>44</sup>

As the above data clearly indicate, Morocco gained significant economic opportunities through the occupation of Western Sahara. For this and some other reasons (nationalism, Berber separatist movements, etc.), it does not intend to return the area to the saharawians.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, local inhabitants can expect only partial autonomy within Morocco as the Moroccan armed forces will never withdraw from Western Sahara voluntarily.

<sup>39</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman: *A Tragedy of Arms. Military and Security Developments in the Maghreb*. 59.

<sup>40</sup> Toby Shelley: *Ibid.* 94.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Security Council Document S-2002-161 (12.02.2002.). <http://www.undemocracy.com/S-2002-161.pdf> (downloaded:03.12.2010.)

<sup>42</sup> Claes Olsson: *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>43</sup> Toby Shelley: *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>44</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>45</sup> Claes Olsson: *Ibid.* 21.

## Colonisation powers in the early times

Europeans arrived to the Canary Islands first (1309), which they could only occupy by 1401, due to the resistance of the Guanche population. Jaime Ferrer sailed along Boujdour not much later, in 1346, however he never returned home from his voyage of discovery.<sup>46</sup>

As the Spaniards almost exterminated the native population of the Canary Islands there was no sufficient labour force available for cultivating the land therefore slave-hunting expeditions were launched to the coasts of the Sahara. The first raids were somewhere at coastlines of Boujdour in 1405, where a complete caravan was looted, the captured Sahrawians were sold as slaves at a good price.<sup>47</sup> The Spaniards having become enthusiastic over the success of the first escapade repeated the slave-hunting journeys called "*entradas*" or "*cabagadas*" for almost two centuries. Certainly, it could not be officially declared that only the slaves are required, therefore they hid their real intentions behind the likeness of Christian mission work.<sup>48</sup>

The very first colony created by Europeans was established by the Portuguese in Ceuta (1415), than mapping the neighbouring areas began, till in 1433–1434 the expedition led by a Gil Eanes and Alfonso Goncalves Baldaya reached Cap Bojador, the coastal region of present day Western Sahara.<sup>49</sup>

During the following expedition, which was led by Goncalves and Nuno Tristao, the Portuguese captured 12 nomads, among whom only a few could speak Arabic as they were of Berber origin. During the expedition in the year of 1440, as many as 235 nomads were captured who were partially sold to the Spanish.<sup>50</sup> By that time a sort of competition evolved between the Spaniards and Portuguese in slave-hunting.

A short while later the Portuguese, systematically mapping the coastline, established their first trade-station on Isle of D'Arguin (1445), slightly South of Cap Blanc.<sup>51</sup>

Portuguese historian Gomes Eannes de Azurara wrote about the expedition of Joao Fernandes in one of his books. The Portuguese explorer set foot on the shores somewhere near to Dakhla in 1445 and prepared a detailed report for the Royal Court. In his report he mentioned that the nomads living there had hardly resembled those living in the territory of Morocco, even the language they spoke was different, and it was the religion alone that was identical as they also recognized Mohammad as their Prophet.<sup>52</sup> In the meantime the Portuguese realized that its more simple to purchase cheap slaves from tribes of the Sahara, then organizing risky surprise raids, therefore they establishes trade relations with several coastal tribes who sold black slaves and gold to them.<sup>53</sup> Black slaves were transported from the town of Ouadana to the Isle of D'Arguin, which meant a merely six-day long journey. Slave-trafficking had been organized from there for about two hundred years by the

<sup>46</sup> M. D. D. Newitt: *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400–1668*. 11.; Rákóczi István: *Tengerek tengelye. Ibér terjeszkedés az Atlantikumban a 15–16. században*. 78.

<sup>47</sup> Erik Jensen: *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>48</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Rákóczi István: *Ibid.* 209–216.

<sup>50</sup> Sík Endre: *Fekete-Afrika története*. I. kötet. 103.

<sup>51</sup> Donald L. Wiedener: *A History of Africa South of The Sahara*. 39.

<sup>52</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 79.

<sup>53</sup> M. D. D. Newitt: *Ibid.* 30–31.

Portuguese and annually thousands of slaves had been transported from the island.<sup>54</sup> Later the islands had been occupied by the British (1666), then the French (1667), finally by the Dutch (1685–1721).

The Holland bought up the acacia gum (*Acacia verec*) originated from Mauritania, which was used in their textile plants set up in Portendick in Africa. The nomads tap this type of acacia tree today too and use it for textile dying, or make jewels out of its hardened version. Although the Dutch captured the Isle of D'Arguin in 1638, later they had to give it up to the French, in this way they completely disappeared from this area (Hague Convention, 1727).<sup>55</sup>

By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the right of control the area from Cap Bojador up to Agadir, including the Canary Islands (1480, Toledo Convention), was awarded to Spain in accordance with the resolution of Pope Sixtus VI.<sup>56</sup>

At the end of the century Diego Garcia de Herrera, the governor of the Canary Islands erected a fortress (Santa Cruz de Mar Pequeña, 1476) and permanent colonies (Ifni) but only in the coastal zones as Spain had not taken the risk of permanent settling although by that time they had already led several expeditions to the inner areas of the Sahara. In fact Herrera had built the new fortress in order to store captured slaves, since the Spanish exterminated the entire population of the islands of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. Their raids were launched from this fortress and the captured slaves were transported to the Canary Islands from here. The success of the slave-hunters is marked by the fact that local tribes laid a siege against the fortress within two years after its building and the garrison had only been saved from massacre by the relief troops of 700 men urgently sent by the governor. As slave-hunting was extremely lucrative and the Court acquired one fifth of its total revenue from this source the raids continued. A slave-hunter, Juan Camacho participated in forty-six actions in 1491 alone, which, in his narration, were all successful. Nevertheless, when Governor Herrera died (1485), the fortress was abandoned and the local tribes demolished it at once.<sup>57</sup>

However, the Spanish sovereigns henceforward needed the revenue derived from slave-trafficking therefore the fortress was rebuilt and operated as a trading centre onward. In October 1550 the Spanish King appointed Captain Alonso Fernandes de Lugo from Andalusia to the Captain of Africa, and ordered him to establish new fortresses. The Captain had three new fortresses constructed: the fortresses of Taghaost, San Miguel de Saca and Cape Bojador. The fortress of San Miguel de Saca was attacked one night prior to its completion by the local nomads, who butchered more than 300 Spanish soldiers, even the life of Lugo was saved by his interpreter, originated from the tribe of Ait Bou Tata.<sup>58</sup>

The increasing number of slave-hunting sorties infuriated the local tribes to such an extent that finally they declared a holy war, jihad. The attacking Bedouins seized and demolished the fortress of Santa Cruz in 1517, massacred the resisting forces and the survivors were sold in style as slaves. The Arabs attacked the slave-ships sailing under Spanish and other flags, later they attacked the settlements in the Canary Islands.

<sup>54</sup> Donald L. Wiedener: *A History of Africa South of The Sahara*. 46–47.

<sup>55</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 94–95.

<sup>56</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 21.

<sup>57</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 84–85.

<sup>58</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 47.

They also sent the captured people to slave-markets. As a repercussion of this, the Spanish officially banned the actions, expecting the Saharans to end their pirate raids, too. Yet, the unpermitted slave-hunting expeditions deluding superabundant return went on till 1593.<sup>59</sup>

However, the lost revenue was supposed to be replaced somehow, therefore the discovery of the fish exuberant off-shore waters came in time. The Spanish concluded several fishing agreements with coastal tribes who granted free fishing or had not attacked the fish-drying plants established on the shores.<sup>60</sup> However, the Spaniards had no intention to share the territories with other Europeans, thence when the Scottish George Glas established a trading station opposite the Island of Fuerteventura (1764), he was imprisoned by the Spanish, and the station christened Hilsborough was set ablaze. The Scottish businessman was arrested when he went to Lanzarote Island to purchase a ship and recruit a new crew. Although he got restored to liberty from his one-year long imprisonment by the intervention of the English Government, the building of the trading station that had remained unhurt so far were destroyed by the nomads.<sup>61</sup>

In 1727 the Spanish and the Sultan of Morocco, Sidi Mohamed ben Abdallah signed the Treaty of Marrakech. However neither the Kingdom of Spain, nor the Kingdom of Morocco could handle the piratical tribes, which is proven by their agreement on common fishing, concluded on 28 May, 1767. The agreement provides exclusive fishing rights to Spain in the coastal waters from Santa Cruz (Ifni) to the Northern borders. Nevertheless, Article 18 of the agreement well indicates the existing problems of the two states in this region:

“His Imperial Majesty will refrain from considering the determination of His Catholic Majesty, according to which He desires to settle to the South of Ved Nun, because He will not be able to assume any responsibility for those accidents and misfortunes, which may be having regard to His empery does not extend this far, and the nomadic and sanguinary people of this country will always cause damages to the inhabitants of the Canary Island, among whom many have been taken captive.”<sup>62</sup>

This agreement was amended several times in the forthcoming years, but this article had steadily been remained in it.

It is to be known that Morocco had never been a national state till the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but it consisted of a Principality of several areas independent from each other. Many a time the Monarch had no power over the tribes living in that area, thus they could live according to their own law. The area under the control of Moroccan leadership (*makhzen*) at that time was called as “*bilad el-makhzen*”. The majority of those cities and oases where the Moroccans established their authority and the representatives of the Sultan (*kaid*) exercised the control over the area belonged here. However, there were areas, which were only known as “*bilad es-siba*” at that time, which meant the land of refugees, i.e. absconders.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 88–90.

<sup>60</sup> Igaz Levente: *Egy elfelejtett válság politikai háttere: Nyugat-Szahara*. 82.

<sup>61</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 91–92.

<sup>62</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 31.

<sup>63</sup> C. R. Pennell: *Morocco since 1830. A history*. 28–29.

The Rif Mountains populated by Kabyles, the Berber settlements of the Atlas Mountains, and the northern part of Western Sahara also belonged to these areas.

Although the Sultans of Morocco officially expressed their empery over these areas their power and military strength was enough to control the most important trading stations and cities only. There were periods, when the Sultans were not able to control a given area for many decades, or even for a century. Still there were such tribes, which attached importance to maintain relations with the Sovereign of Morocco, therefore they entered into an alliance (*bayaa*) with him, and the Sultan appointed the chief of the tribe by a decree (*dahir*) as his representative. A few tribes of the Sahara also entered an alliance with the Sultan but there were some tribes which fled from his reign to the Sahara, like the tribes of Arosien, Ait Lahsen, or Ouled Bou Sbaa. Nevertheless, the Reguibat tribes, which constitute almost 60 per cent of the Sahrawian population, had never signed any document, which would have provided legal title to the Sultan to hold dominion over them.<sup>64</sup>

The fact that the Sultan of Morocco had no influence over the Sahrawian tribes caused several problems not only to the Spanish but to the French diplomacy too, as the mediation of the Emir of Mauritania was needed to ransom French seamen shipwrecked at the coasts of Western Sahara. Since the Emir maintained good connections with the 'Council of Forty', he could have successfully negotiated between the parties.<sup>65</sup>

Alexander Scott was among the shipwrecked mariners who suffered shipwreck between Cape Noun and Tarfaja in 1810. The captors of the sailor sold him as a slave to a warrior from the Toubalt tribe, who had been his master for five years. When Scott was travelling in the Atlas Mountains with his owner he escaped and was assisted home by an English major in official mission in that locality.<sup>66</sup> That was the time when leaders of Spain decided to occupy the coastal lines of Western Sahara, partly to eliminate the pirate actions, partly to defend the Canary Islands.

## Spanish occupation of Western Sahara

The leaders of Spain announced to establish a protectorate on the area from Cap Blanc to Cap Bojador in December 1884. This idea was later approved and then legitimated by the participants of the Berlin Conference on 26 February, 1885.<sup>67</sup> The Spaniards created the *Compania Comercial Hispano-Africana* on 30 March, 1884 on the model of the well functioning North-African Company (Mackenzie Company, Cape Juby) with English-Scotch interest.<sup>68</sup>

Several people participated in the company, who took positions in the top political or economic leadership of the kingdom restored in 1874. According to their concept, the Kingdom of Spain, having lost her power and vegetating like her own imperial shadow ought to have established new colonies, particularly on the territories of Africa not

<sup>64</sup> John Mercer: *The Sahrawis of Western Sahara*. 5.

<sup>65</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 31–32.

<sup>66</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 99.

<sup>67</sup> János Besenyő: *Ibid.* 49.

<sup>68</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 33–36.

occupied by other European countries. The concept was promoted by king Alphonso XII himself and he donated 3,000 Pesetas to the company, which collected 37,000 Pesetas within a short time, covering the expenses of two expeditions.

The first expedition led by Manuel Iradier, Amando Ossorio and Bernabe Jimenes headed to the area of Equatorial Guinea, while the other group led by Emilio Bonelli Hernando went to Western Sahara. The concept of founding colonies had been approved by royalist, conservative Prime Minister Canovas del Castillo, however, the Government resigned in the meantime, thus only the minister of foreign affairs of the new Government could order the army to conquer the unoccupied coasts of the Sahara.

The Spanish unit led by Captain Emilio Bonelli Hernando conquered Dakhla (Villa Cisneros), where they erected a fortress and established the mail-service. Only 25 soldiers served in the fortress at that time, who were rotated in three month periods when the ship with the supplies from the Canary Islands arrived. Bonelli became the first military commander, who had been living in Morocco for more than six years therefore he was fluent in Arabic and could develop good connections with the representatives of the local tribes. The captain made a proposal to the government to establish further stations along the coastline (Angra de Cintra, Cape Blanc and Rio de Oro).<sup>69</sup>

To provide protection to the coasts of the Sahara and the newly established settlements the Government sent a considerable fleet reinforcement to the Canary Islands with the order to pacify the shores of Western Africa. By April 1886 the Spanish penetrated inside the continent and appointed the first Governor, who represented the Government in the area.

With the aid of a Spaniard speaking Arabic perfectly the Spanish managed to find several local representatives of the tribes, who were ready to sign an agreement recognizing the Spanish control (Iyill Convention).<sup>70</sup> In spite of the fact that their representatives had signed the Agreement the tribes represented by them took up arms against the Spanish troops marching in. The Sahrawian tribes organized several insurrections against the Spanish power of occupation, and they assaulted the fortress of Villa Cisneros in 1887, then they attacked the fort in 1892 again, while in 1894 they set fire to ships "Tres de Mayo" and "Las Marias", anchored in the bay.<sup>71</sup>

All that the Spanish managed to achieve was a single agreement signed on behalf of the Sahrawian tribes by Ould Laroussi, the chief of one of the Ouled Delim tribes. Namely, the tribal leader recognized that it was easier to trade with the Spanish than to fight against them. Of course, complying the agreement was not meant by other tribes, so the skirmish went on.

The Sahrawian tribes still independent from Spain fought a battle at Daora in 1899 against the troops of the Sultan of Morocco, where they prevented the Moroccans to gain grounds in the Sahara area.<sup>72</sup> In the meantime the Spanish wanted to ensure their rights already won against the French and other European states, therefore they came to an agreement with France occupying Moroccan and Mauritanian territories on disputed border issues. As a result of the negotiations the first French and Spanish border agreement was

<sup>69</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 106–107.

<sup>70</sup> Igaz Levente: *Ibid.* 82.

<sup>71</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 43.

<sup>72</sup> Tony Hodges: *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*. 23.

ratified on 27 June, 1900, which was amended by secret agreements, signed on 3 October, 1904 and later, on 27 November 1912.<sup>73</sup>

These agreements established the borders which were also approved by the contemporary states, with the sole exception of present-day Morocco. The borders were also established within the framework of a new agreement in 1954. Despite the successful Spanish and French diplomatic co-operation the Spanish were able to effectively act only in the coastal areas while the French managed to gain grounds in the Sahara areas faster and more spectacularly. That is why Sheikh of Smara Ma El-Ajnin, a religious leader of Mauritanian descent asked the help of the Moroccan ruler to fight against the French (1905). The popular religious and military leader known by the nickname 'Ma El-Ajnin' (Water of the Eyes) did not belong to any Sahrawian tribe.

The latter holy man of the Sahrawian tribes was born in Hodh, near the banks of the River Niger around 1830–31, under the name of Mohammed Mustafa Ould Sheikh Mohammed Fadel.<sup>74</sup>

His family came from Tafilalet (South-East Morocco) and moved to Hodh in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. His father, Mohammed Fadel Ould Mamin, was one of the most honourable religious leaders (*marabu*) of the city, who founded the Kadirija denomination of Sufism (Muslim religious school). As a tradesman Ma El-Ajnin moved to the North-Western part of the Sahara in 1859, close to Tindouf city founded by the Tadjakent tribe a few years earlier. When he arrived to this area he had already performed his pilgrimage to Mecca thus he received great prestige among those people living here, who had never reached Mecca.<sup>75</sup> Because he maintained good connections with the members of the Alavita dynasty it is not surprising either that in 1887 the then Monarch of Morocco appointed him his official representative to the nomads of the Sahara, who already worshipped him as a saint. When the construction of the city of Smara founded by him had begun, the then Sultan Moulay Abdelaziz sent masons and building material (timber beams and other material not available in that region) to expedite the construction.<sup>76</sup>

However, the Sheikh worried about the headway of the French, who approved a plan in 1899, the developer of which proposed the creation a French protectorate from Senegal to the River Draa. In the spirit of the plan the French had occupied the entire territory of both Algeria and Tunis by 1903.<sup>77</sup> The fortified city of Brakna, the last refuge of the resisting Arab warriors, was conquered by Xavier Coppolani of Corsican origin in French service by the end of 1903. Thus there was no more considerable power in the North, which could offer resistance against the colonization intentions of the French, although the French commander and a few soldiers were slaughtered by the nomadic troop led by Sidi Seghir Ould Moulay Zein in the village of Tagant later on, when he stood overnight in the local caravansary in transit with a few soldiers (12 May, 1904).<sup>78</sup>

According to the French assumption the raid was ordered by Ma El-Ajnin. Of course, the assassination could only temporarily delay the French, who soon appointed a new

<sup>73</sup> *Algeria–Western Sahara (Spanish Sahara) Boundary*. 3.

<sup>74</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 111.

<sup>75</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Ibid.* 218–219.

<sup>76</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 112.

<sup>77</sup> Virginia McLean Thompson – Richard Adloff: *The Western Saharans. Background to Conflict*. 42.

<sup>78</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 57.



commander to lead their troops. The French troops started to occupy the still independent little desert state, Adrar at that time (9 January, 1909). The French defeated the resisting tribes (Ouled Delim, Reguibat, and Aroussiyine tribes) in several battles, which surrendered after losing their leaders and most of their warriors.<sup>79</sup>

That's the reason why Sheikh Ma El-Ajnin tried to counterbalance the French headway by founding a new town, present day Smara, in the territory still under Spanish control (1898). The town was located between Tindouf and Adrar, near a busy caravan route, and the good lands and well suitable for grazing further increased its value. The construction of the main buildings of the town was completed by 1902 and Ma El-Ajnin dislocated his headquarters here for good.

It is interesting that the Sheikh did not regard the Spaniard so dangerous, who really had control over the three major cities strengthened by them, namely Villa Cisneros (Dakhla), La Guerra and the port of Cabo Juby (Tarfaya), and Sidi Ifni later. Therefore the patrolling warriors of the Sheikh left the Spanish patrols in peace, moreover, they even exchanged commodities with the smaller Spanish military posts, where they could pay for tea, sugar, flour and other commodities with their products (furs, stock, dates, etc.). As the Spaniards had not represented a considerable threat, the chiefs of the local tribes rather focused on the attacks against the French forces.<sup>80</sup>

As early as 1902 the French launched an expedition to the Sahara, which surveyed the area of present day Western Sahara and Mauritania, and also collected information for the French troops (Blanchet expedition) springing to attack soon afterwards. One of the members of the expedition, lieutenant Jouinot-Gambetta in his report warned the French military leadership about the dangerousness of the Sheikh:

"Ma El-Ajnin, alias Mohamet Fadel, who lives among the locals is a truly fanatic Muslim, and according to his vision their faith will triumph and by that they will overcome the infidels occupying their land."<sup>81</sup>

The new town, Smara, soon became the spiritual centre of the nomads of the Sahara, from where they started to organize the armed uprising against the French. According to the concept of the Sheikh, they could have joined the factious tribes with the support of Morocco then they could have announced a holy war (jihad) against the infidels. The Monarch of Morocco first promised his support for the revolt, but he compromised with the French later, and then the betrayed Sheikh attacked Morocco. His troops comprising of Sahrawian and Mauritanian tribes occupied Marrakesh, but suffered defeat at Fez on 23 June, 1910 from the better equipped and trained French troops led by General Moinier.<sup>82</sup>

The Sheikh died within a few months, and his sons El-Hiba and Mohammed Laghdaf continued the struggle, however, they were far from being as talented strategists and spiritual leaders as their father. The reputation of the Sheikh is also shown by the fact that

<sup>79</sup> Porch Douglas: *The Conquest of the Sahara*. 213–214.

<sup>80</sup> John Mercer: *The Sahrawis of Western Sahara*. 5.

<sup>81</sup> James J. Cooke: *New French Imperialism 1880-1910: The Third Republic and Colonial Expansion*. 138.

<sup>82</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 114.

his descendants, as an independent tribe, became a part of those living in Western Sahara and had seats in the 'Council of Forty', later even in the Djemma.

The tribes of Western Sahara continuing their struggle used the area of Saguia El Hamra under Spanish rule as the background-base of the fight against the French.<sup>83</sup>

As Spain was greatly disturbed by the French intention to develop a bordering colonial empire on the territory of Western Sahara, there was not any particular Spanish intervention against the Sahrawians. Moreover, there are evidences of paying monthly salary for Laghdaf even in 1919, so that he would not attack Spanish military check-points and other interests.

It is also surprising that the movement with considerable religious background and declaring all-out war against Christians had procured the majority of their weapons from the companies Woerman of Hamburg and Torres of Barcelona.<sup>84</sup>

That was also well-known by the French military high command, therefore army units penetrated the territory of Saguia El Hamra under the cover of chasing rebellious tribes several times. During one of these attacks the units of Mouret comprising of the Senegal Rifle and Kounta, Oulad and Ghalian tribesmen Gendarme following a more than 800-kilometre-long forced march captured and later demolished Smara together with its Library founded by Sheikh Ma El-Ajnin.<sup>85</sup> More than 5,000 valuable, ancient manuscripts were stored in that library, a significant part of which perished. This march is mentioned by the French even today as a daring military action as the lieutenant colonel departed with his unit from Atar Garrison on 9 February and arrived in Smara on 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

Laghdaf tried to force a battle with the French troops leaving the town, therefore he lured them to the environs of Leburat. He passed false information to the French that he had barely 250 armed men, therefore they could surely expect a victory, but in reality, he had 1,200 warriors, mostly from the coalition of Reguibat Sarg and Sahel tribes. The Sahrawians attacked the rearguard of the French camping in the Valley of Tagliat (Oued Tagliat), and also the units sent to their rescue, finally completely surrounded the troops of Mouret (10 March).

The raid was just partial success, since the total losses of the 400-strong French unit after the battle were two officers (Lieutenant Morello and Captain Verhardt) and 28 enlisted, while more than 200 soldiers of Mouret were wounded. Finally the French retreated toward Mauritania, but the Sahrawians were unable to exploit their dubious victory, as they suffered the loss of nearly 100 men and the discouraged desert warriors refused to chase the French any further.<sup>86</sup>

After the lost battle Mouret (according to his memoirs, at least) could have defeated the Bedouins led by Laghdaf, however, he ordered retreat to the French Garrison in Atar city (28 March, 1913), where his units were originally stationing.

Otherwise the French deny the fact of setting the library ablaze. According to their story the soldiers of Mouret only placed mines under the most important buildings, in order to demonstrate their determination to the local population, but they did not detonate anything.

<sup>83</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Ibid.* 227.

<sup>84</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War.* 58–60.

<sup>85</sup> B. G. Martin: *Muslim Brotherhoods in Nineteenth-Century Africa.* 137.

<sup>86</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara.* 114.

Although, due to an unfortunate accident (lightning) a part of the library really took fire, but they rescued the books, a part of which later went into Moroccan possession somehow.

Two French travellers in 1931 still saw the books, and the airplanes of the French colonial army took photos on Smara to prove to the world that their predecessors did not destroy the city.<sup>87</sup> The photos were published in a Moroccan daily, even so, the descendants of the Sheikh have possessed no reliable information about the library to this day.

There was no significant fighting on this territory during World War I, apart from a smaller marine conflict, in which two German cruisers encountered with one of the battle ships of the British Fleet near to Dakhla. Naturally the German high command tried to engage French troops in the Sahara, as well; therefore they delivered weapons and other equipment to El-Hiba. The UC20 submarine sent by the Germans reached the coastlines of the Sahara on 15 October, 1916, where Edgar Probst, the consul stationing in Fez earlier handed over 600 modern weapons and the letter of the Ottoman Sultan to the Sahrawians. On his way back the Spanish captured the German envoy near Tarfaya and deported him to the Canary Islands.<sup>88</sup>

As France and Spain did not wage war on each other, the Spanish authorities tried to consolidate the relations of the territory under their rule.

The Spanish Governor, Francisco Bens Argandona, appointed in 1903, established good relations with the Ouled Delim, Ouled Bou Sbaa and Arosien tribes. The veteran of the Cuban war overbore the members of the tribes with his unescorted trips in the Sahara area, accompanied by a few Sahrawians. However, his friendships with the Sahrawians was not looked with favour by the French, and when he met with Sheikh El-Hiba, who was one of the leading personalities of the uprising against France, they protested in an official note against contravening the agreement between the two states. During the 22 years of his governorate he founded the second settlement, Cabo Juby (29 June, 1916) of the conclave on the previous location of the North-West African Company of Mackenzie. The next settlement, which was occupied and fortified by the Spanish under his command, was the city of La Guerra (27 November, 1919).

Although the Spanish Government officially banned the occupation of the settlement, they easily occupied the city with three officers and two platoons of the 66 infantry regiment under the shroud of the night. As a matter of course, the leadership in Madrid, previously worried about the attack of the French and the local nomads, declared the entire operation their own success. Anyhow, the capture of the new city counter-balanced the trading influence of the nearby French city, Port Etienne.<sup>89</sup>

703 Spanish soldiers served at the areas of the Sahara at that time, out of which 121 in Villa Cisneros, 159 in La Guerra and 423 in Tarfaya. The strength of the contingent in Tarfaya was increased due to the airfield and the proximity of the French forces. 6 military airplanes (Henkel aircraft) had been deployed at the airfield since 1928.

In the meantime the new French Governor, General Gaden, developed new plans to pacify the nomads living on the territory. However, the situation in Mauritania and some

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<sup>87</sup> David Hatcher Childress: *Lost Cities of Atlantis. Ancient Europe & the Mediterranean*. 242.

<sup>88</sup> Tony Hodges: *The Roots of a Desert War*. 60.

<sup>89</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 118.

parts of Western Sahara began to consolidate only later, after the Battle of Trefiya in 1925, where the French completely eliminated the troops of the rebel tribes.

Nevertheless, the raids went on and the situation in the Sahara worsened so far that France threatened Spain with the occupation of Spanish-controlled territories in 1934, if Spain could not hold up law and order there.<sup>90</sup>

In order to demonstrate the seriousness of the situation the French troops led by Colonel Trinquet occupied the town of Tinduf, which was an extremely important strategic point, and was annexed it to Algeria within a few years.<sup>91</sup>

The resistance of the Sahara tribes had become exhausted by then, and when the revolt of Ait Ba Amrane tribe was suppressed in the same year (4 March, 1934), the nomads definitively gave up to maraud the French territories.<sup>92</sup>

The Spanish, led by Captain Galo and Lieutenant Carlos de la Gandara, sent their camel detail comprising of Sahrawian soldiers to Daora. Following the occupation of the town the scarcely defended city of Smara was also occupied by the Spanish, where they established a permanent garrison.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, they were able to completely occupy the areas of Western Sahara only by 1936, then they deployed garrisons (Zug, Tichla, etc.) there and renamed the territory Spanish Sahara.<sup>94</sup>

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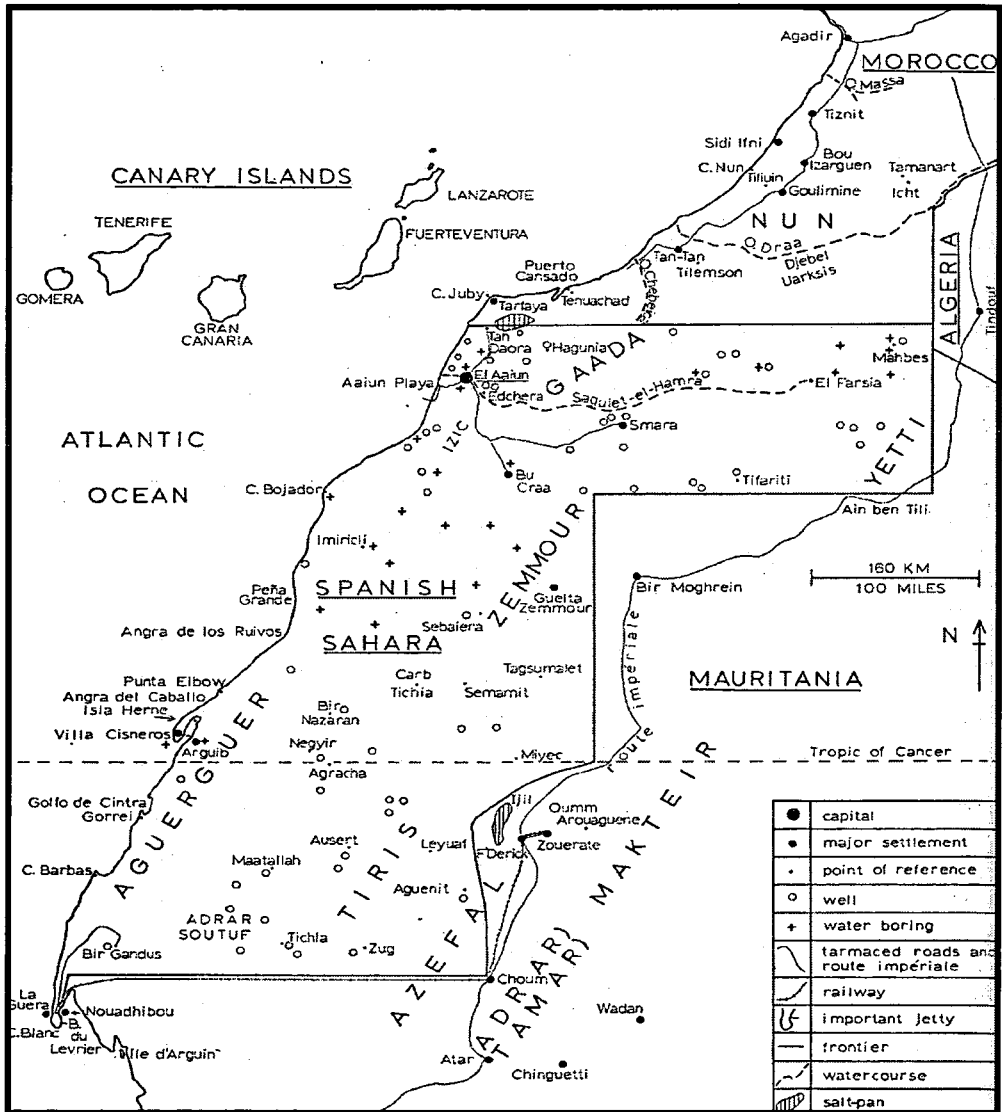
<sup>90</sup> Toby Shelley: *Ibid.* 19.

<sup>91</sup> John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. 116.

<sup>92</sup> Lloyd Cabot Briggs: *Ibid.* 236.

<sup>93</sup> Toby Shelley: *Ibid.* 188.

<sup>94</sup> Tony Hodges: *Historical Dictionary of Western Sahara*. 6.



Sources: John Mercer: *Spanish Sahara*. George Allen & Unwin, London, 1976.



## *Maltese–Hungarian Relations*

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### **Relations in the 1960s**

Under the governance of the Nationalist Party (*Partit Nazzjonalista*, PN), the Maltese foreign policy was unilaterally British-oriented, since the economic and financial support came to Malta from Great Britain. Therefore, Malta's relations with other countries were limited, and that is the reason why Malta did not have strong relations with Hungary. However, when Malta gained its independence, it was necessary for her to be acknowledged, as a newly independent state, by as many countries as possible. After the declaration of independence, on September 21 1964, Malta received several messages from other states' presidents and prime ministers, in which they not only congratulated, but also recognized Malta in her independent status. The Hungarian Government also sent a letter to the Maltese Government, stating, that "*The Presidential Council of the People's Republic of Hungary recognizes Malta as an independent state*".<sup>1</sup> Moreover, János Kádár's government assured Borg Olivier's government that "*on the basis of the principles of the United Nations, the friendly relationships between the two states will continue*".<sup>2</sup>

The other reason why Malta did not have direct relationship with Hungary originated in the fact that Hungary was under Soviet hegemony at that time. The Soviet ideology, the communism was strictly rejected by the Maltese Catholic Church, which actively took part in politics, and supported the PN on several occasions.<sup>3</sup> Archbishop Gonzi condemned to socialism and communism, and therefore he disapproved the policy of the Malta Labour Party, led by Dominic Mintoff. Nevertheless, Mintoff tried to form relations with socialist countries, and as a result he established an informal relationship between Hungary and Malta in 1965. He wanted to visit to Hungary and negotiate with the Hungarian Government. At that time Hungary's bilateral relations were also expanded, so we accepted his request, moreover the Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) – henceforth MSZMP –, consented establishing connections between the PL and the MSZMP. However, the Hungarian Party told Mr. Mintoff that "*he had better not visit Hun-*

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Hungary (NAH), Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1965, box 79, 005286/1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> The Labour Party (*Partit Laburista*, PL) established connections with the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) which was the source of several debates between the party and the church in the 1960s.

gary during the Budapest International Fair, but after that, and the Maltese should pay for the cost of the trip".<sup>4</sup>

Asking for economic aid was already among Mr. Mintoff's intentions at that time. Although, he did not mention any specific ideas, the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce approved to initiate negotiations in this field. Hungary made a red meat business with the L. Scerr-Taylor Maltese red beef-importer company during these talks.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, on the proposal of this company, the Hungarians initiated the establishment of the Hungarian-Maltese Association.<sup>6</sup>

Mintoff had an other request, beside his original one. In order to improve printing facilities in Malta, he wanted to talk with pressmen and publisher technicians, and "he asked for printing machines the Hungarians no longer wanted to use".<sup>7</sup> Moreover, "he asked for scholarships for Maltese students in any higher education institutions or in trade unionist schools in Budapest".<sup>8</sup>

## Relations in the 1970s

The 1971 election had a great effect on the improvement of Maltese-Hungarian relations. The Partit Nazzjonalista raised the number of the parliamentary seats, in the hope that they can weaken the opposition. However, the majority of the voters voted for the PL, so Dominic Mintoff's party took over the control of the state, which had great effects on foreign policy. This meant that the solely British-oriented foreign policy of Malta ended, and a new era began with the polling.

Due to the PL's victory, the relationship between Malta and Hungary started to bloom, however, its basis was laid down by the PN in October 1970. Under the governance of the PN "the People's Republic of Hungary and the Government of Malta established a diplomatic relation on ambassadorial level".<sup>9</sup> Hungary did not establish an embassy in Malta, but Hungary's Maltese ambassador became the Hungarian Ambassador to Rome, who was dr. József Bényi at that time.<sup>10</sup> The Hungarian Presidential Council affirmed this decision, and Her Majesty the Queen also gave her consent to it.<sup>11</sup>

## Diplomatic Relations

Due to Dominic Mintoff's victory at the 1971 election, Malta's foreign policy took a new direction. The PL's foreign policy was based on seeking for economic support and for economic aid from abroad, as Mintoff's main aim was to make Malta totally independent of the British. What he wanted was to achieve economic viability with the help of the socialist countries.

<sup>4</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1965, box 79, 001945/1

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 005879

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1970, box 60, 002806/6

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 002806/7

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 002806/9



Mintoff did not waste his time, and he began to establish connections with socialist countries right after his election victory. On October 26 1971, he held a talk with the Hungarian Ambassador to Rome, during which the Maltese Prime Minister told him that Malta was seeking the urgent help of the Warsaw Pact-countries, so Hungary's help too. On November 2 1971 he planned a visit to Romania, and on November 11–12 1971 to Yugoslavia, in order to establish diplomatic relations with those countries as well. He asked the Hungarian State's leadership to make an appointment with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Jenő Fock, between his visit to Romania and Yugoslavia. This meeting was the next stage in the development of political relations between Malta and Hungary, as Mintoff wanted to initiate establishing alliance between the PL and MSZMP.<sup>12</sup>

Besides this topic, Mintoff wanted to discuss economic issues, too. However, neither the Maltese–Hungarian, nor the Hungarian economy made it possible to give Malta credit or aid at that time.<sup>13</sup>

Mintoff visited to Hungary on November 6, however, he did not meet with the Hungarian Prime Minister Jenő Fock, but with János Nagy, the Deputy-Foreign Minister. This was a short visit as they talked only at the airport. Mintoff informed János Nagy that the British Government created difficult economic conditions for Malta, and they lacked in cadres. They also discussed that Hungary should send an economic delegation to Malta, which seemed urgent to them, since they asked dr. József Bényi several times<sup>14</sup> in November inquiring about when the Hungarian delegation would arrive in Malta.<sup>15</sup>

The Maltese–Hungarian diplomatic relations became stronger at the end of the 1970s. This strengthening was driven by the force to establish a viable economy in Malta on the one hand, and to get as much economic support as possible, on the other, in order to compensate for the loss of the income, after leave of the British. The first stage of these stronger relations was a negotiation between the Maltese and the Hungarian Prime Minister in Valletta on May 8–10 1977. The second stage was the Belgrade Talks on July 21 1978. During this conference Pál Rácz, Secretary of Foreign Affairs, talked with Godfrey Testa, chairman of the Maltese delegation, and one of the members of the National Executive Committee of the PL. They discussed several topics during this meeting. First of all, Testa proposed the establishment of a Hungarian Embassy in Malta. Secondly, he suggested the strengthening of the direct relations between the PL and the MSZMP. Thirdly, in connection with the economic affairs, he initiated the establishment of mutual investments and companies. Then, he asked Pál Rácz to send Hungarian doctors to Malta. After that, he proposed the cooperation of the two countries' social, women and youth organisations, and last but not the least, he asked us to sign the proposed treaty about cultural cooperation. The Hungarian delegation was willing to fulfill the requests, but it was not possible at that time to establish an embassy on the island. However, Pál Rácz promised Testa that the Hungarian Ambassador to Rome would visit Malta soon, in order to promote the Maltese requests.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1971, box 73, 001880/11

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Mintoff sent two letters to the Hungarian Ambassador to Rome – on November 26 and on November 27 – inquiring about the exact date of the Hungarian delegation's arrival to Malta.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 001880/23

<sup>16</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001616/1

## Frigyés Puja's Talks in Malta and their Consequences

The most important stage of the Maltese–Hungarian diplomatic relations was the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Frigyés Puja's negotiation with the Maltese Government in Malta. The Maltese Government invited him between December 19 and 21, and he travelled there in early January, 1979. The negotiations were short, they took place between January 9 and 11.<sup>17</sup> Prior to his visit, a negotiation-plan was made, consisting the Maltese and Hungarian point of views, mainly about international issues and bilateral political relations.

One of the main themes of international issues was the development of the international situation and of détente. In case of détente, the Maltese and the Hungarians supported this policy, however, the Maltese wanted to use it mainly in order to ensure their position in the Mediterranean. The Maltese and Hungarian opinions differed in one matter: China's policy. The Hungarian leaders *"rejected the Maoist leaders' nationalist and hegemonistic foreign policy which endangers the peace, and does harm for the matter of progress"*.<sup>18</sup> Malta, however, stood on the side of China – as she got financial aid from the Asian country – and declared that *"in order to establish a friendly relationship between China and Hungary, Malta is willing to do anything"*.<sup>19</sup>

The other main point of the international issues was the Soviet–American relationship. Hungary and Malta had similar opinions about this issue, especially about arm limitations. The Hungarians ascribed great importance to the SALT II treaty,<sup>20</sup> and emphasised the *"complex feature of maintaining peace"*.<sup>21</sup> In order to achieve it, Hungary regarded confidence-building inevitable in the intergovernmental relations, which should be expanded to the Mediterranean, as well. Furthermore, we appreciated and stood for Malta's initiative to abandon the British military base on its territory. Malta's main aim, in fact, was to turn the Mediterranean into a nuclear-free zone, and *"for her disarmament meant Mediterranean disarmament, and peace meant Mediterranean peace"*.<sup>22</sup> That was the main reason they wanted to wind up the NATO base in Malta.

In connection with European security and cooperation, the Hungarians suggested a Pan-European cooperation in the light of the Final Act of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, while Malta's main aim was to create détente in the Mediterranean, and she *"wanted to exploit the opportunities, offered by the Final Act, one-sidedly, according to their own needs"*.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the bilateral political connections, we know that the two countries did not have a meeting since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malta and Hungary. That was the reason why Malta invited Frigyés Puja to Malta. As it was mentioned before,

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 001570/7

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 001570/31

<sup>19</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1979, box 90, 0034/1

<sup>20</sup> Strategic Arm Limitation Talks. These talks were held between the two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States of America. The main aim of the negotiations was to maximize the number of the ballistic missiles.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

he visited Valletta between January 9 and 11 1979 as the leader of a ten-member delegation. He had talks with Dominic Mintoff and Joseph Cassar, Deputy Prime Minister. The negotiations focused on three main areas: the international relations, with a great emphasis on the European security, Maltese-Hungarian economic cooperation and the development of the bilateral relations.<sup>24</sup>

Concerning international relations, they talked about the status of Malta in the Mediterranean, Malta's policy, and the Maltese proposal concerning the establishment of a friendly relationship between Hungary and China. The Maltese said that "*they are generally satisfied with the Maltese-Hungarian relationship*",<sup>25</sup> however, they wanted Hungarian initiatives in the fields of diplomacy, economy and culture. The Maltese were displeased with the lack of progress in the relationship with Hungary, which was disadvantageous to them as they wanted to establish profitable political and economic relations with the socialist Hungary, as soon as it was possible. Principally, the representatives discussed to what extent the Hungarian industrial companies could contribute to the development of the Maltese manufacturing industry, to the modernisation of the agriculture and to the establishment of common businesses.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the political relations, the Maltese wanted to strengthen the bond between the MSZMP and the PL, as they needed Hungary's recognition and support, after the leave of the British.<sup>27</sup> At the end of the talks, Frigyes Puja informed Mintoff that after returning Hungary, he would discuss the mutually elaborated plans and proposals with the Hungarian Government. Finally, he said that "*he hopes that these plans and proposals will be materialized in concrete treaties in the near future*".<sup>28</sup>

After the negotiations, the Hungarian delegation visited to the Dockyard, to the Grand Harbour of Valletta and they went sightseeing in Valletta. In the evening the Maltese President, Anton Buttigieg invited them to a banquet at his presidential apartment.<sup>29</sup>

After returning Hungary, the Hungarian Prime Minister initiated in the Hungarian Government to devise proposals concerning the above mentioned issues. Regarding the diplomatic connections, the Hungarian politicians aimed at, among other things, arranging regular meetings between the Foreign Ministers, inviting the Maltese leaders to the national feast in March, and strengthening the relationship between the Maltese and Hungarian delegations in the international organizations.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the Hungarian Government wanted to invite Dominic Mintoff to Hungary before the Madrid Conference.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Népszabadság*, 10 January 1979.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* 11 January 1979.

<sup>27</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/31

<sup>28</sup> *Times of Malta*, 12 January 1979.

<sup>29</sup> *Népszabadság*, 11 January 1979.

<sup>30</sup> Malta and Hungary at that time were members of the United Nations and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

<sup>31</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1979, box 90, 01888

## Economic Relations

### *Trade*

Although, Malta gained political independence on September 21 1964, it did not mean that she became independent economically. Malta was a British military base for 150 years, for which the British paid millions of pounds. The whole Maltese economy depended on the British as they did not only provided money, but they employed most of the Maltese workers in the Dockyard and on the air base. However, after giving political independence to Malta, the British forces were gradually withdrawn from there, so the economy sought for new basis. This proved a difficult task, as in order to establish a viable economy Malta inevitably needed foreign help, particularly loans, grants and aids.<sup>32</sup>

The number of the countries giving assistance rose after the 1971-elections, since the PL, whose main aim was to break with Britain, won this election. The party sympathized with the socialist countries, and turned to them for economic help. While asking for support, Mintoff often argued that establishing trade relations with Malta would be beneficial for them in the future, as Malta lay in the heart of the Mediterranean, so she could open the market towards the Arab world. On the other hand, Malta became the joint member of the European Economic Community on April 1 1971, by which the economic relations could develop more easily.<sup>33</sup>

Raising these arguments Malta turned to Hungary to ask for economic aid. The Maltese-Hungarian relations became stronger after the establishment of the diplomatic relations in December 1970 which directly promoted the formation of economic ties. The first step towards it was the Maltese International Fair, where Hungary was invited.<sup>34</sup>

The second step in strengthening the economic relations was a talk between Pál Losonczi, the president of the Presidential Council of the People's Republic of Hungary, and Dominic Mintoff in October 1971. During this negotiation Mintoff said that Britain gave only £ 5,25 million – while the rent was annually £ 14 million earlier – and only Italy helped Malta with £ 2,5 million to improve her economic and transportation facilities. As these incomes were quite low, Mintoff asked Pál Losonczi to raise our import from Malta, and he was inquiring about the exact date of the Hungarian economic delegation's arrival. The delegation visited Malta between February 12 and 18 1972, and came to an agreement with Malta on small-scale economic cooperation.<sup>35</sup>

The economic negotiations between Malta and Hungary continued in 1974, when the Government of Malta invited Imre Dimény, Minister of Agriculture and Nutrition, to visit to Malta and to discuss economic issues. The Maltese proposed that they would import 20-40000 cattle, each 250-300 kg, from Hungary, and they wanted to fatten them to slaughter. This business was advantageous for them in two aspects. One was that Malta lifted its

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<sup>32</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1971, box 73, 001880/1

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 001880/4

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 001880/14

import duty on fodder, the other was that as the island country became the joint-member of the EEC, so they were allowed to sell the animals on the Common Market.<sup>36</sup>

After these meetings and negotiations there is no mention of the economic relations between the two countries in the despatch of the Foreign Minister until 1977. On January 19 1977 a delegation visited Malta to sign a trade treaty which was in force for five years.<sup>37</sup> This treaty proved a milestone in the Maltese-Hungarian relations. It included all the important passages prescribed by the international trade rules, consequently Malta and Hungary could buy products from each other without any difficulty. Furthermore, they set up a joint committee which was responsible for promoting trade between the two countries. The main aim of the negotiation was to sign the treaty, and after signing it, the Hungarian delegation visited the Maltese Drydock Company Ltd., the Maltese Weaving and Spinning Factory, the Glass Factory and the Chocolate Factory.<sup>38</sup>

The next round of negotiations took place in Budapest in 1978. Prior to these negotiations, a *Memorandum* was compiled, listing the main areas of cooperation, and analyzing the economic year of 1977. According to this analysis, the economic relations did not improve to the extent it was prescribed by the 1977-treaty. Malta, in fact, imported products from Hungary totalling £M 500.000, however, Hungary did not import any product from Malta. In order to avoid such situation in the future, the Maltese offered to sign a compensation deal on meat-trade. According to it, Malta would import livestock and meat products only from Hungary, and Hungary, in return, would import Maltese products and shipping facilities. Furthermore, as Malta had high import exigency, so to say she was at the mercy of foreign markets, the Government of Malta offered Hungary that if the Hungarians reduced the custom duties by 4%, Malta would import meat products only from Hungary.<sup>39</sup>

The above mentioned talks were held between September 21 and 23 1978. The chairmen of the talks were dr. Robert Stivala, Under-Secretary of Trade and Tourism and István Török, Deputy Foreign Trade Minister.<sup>40</sup> During the discussions the two countries' representatives discussed the economic relations in 1977 and 1978, and they tried to work out a plan to make the commercial exchanges more dynamic. According to the despatch made after the meeting, Hungary exported products totalling \$ 1.511.796 in 1978, and to the delight of the Maltese the Hungarians also imported products totalling \$ 932.000. In 1977 our export was made up of the following products: one third of the export was textile products, 20-20% of it was canned meat and tinned fruit, less than 20% of it were medical products and 10% of it were sheep. These rates changed in 1978 as 52% of our export were sheep, the rate of the textile products dropped to 10%, and the rate of the medical raw materials, electric bulbs, electrics and incandescent lamps dropped to 2-7%. Besides it, they

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 001827/2

<sup>37</sup> The members of the Hungarian delegation were Péter Balázs, Ida Tóth, Deputy Foreign Trade Minister, Anikó Ivanka, mercurial-political expert, György Obláth, mercurial consultant and Katrin Tarr, Mercurial Secretary of the Embassy of Hungary to Rome. *Times of Malta*, 22 January 1977.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/17

<sup>40</sup> *Népszabadság*, 23 September 1978.

still welcomed Hungarian economists in Malta, and they emphasised the advantage of Malta's geographical position, as a transit market towards Africa.<sup>41</sup>

Besides the above mentioned issues, the representatives discussed other possible areas of cooperation. They came to the conclusion that Hungary could contribute to the industrialization of Malta through establishing industrial plants and providing machines used in metallurgy, metal-processing, food industry and manufacture. The Maltese experts were accompanied by a group of businessmen who held talks with the representatives of Hungarian industrial and export companies.<sup>42</sup>

Malta's transit market-nature was mentioned in the negotiation-plan for Frigyes Puja, Hungarian Foreign Minister, as well. The Maltese asked Hungary to import more products from Malta, to give them aid and credit, and to promote Hungarian tourism to Malta. To favour of this, in the spirit of the Helsinki Summit, they revoked the exigency of the visa, and they tried to lure Hungarian tourists to Malta.<sup>43</sup>

Agatha Barbara, Minister of Labour, Culture and Welfare, visited Hungary between September 5 and 8 1978. Her primary aim was to strengthen cultural relations, but she also tried to make economic deals. In order to broaden the customer market for the Maltese Shoe Factory, she talked with Lajos Rév, the chairman of the Nationwide Council of the Industrial Associations. She wanted to make a trade agreement according to which Hungary would import 50.000 pair of shoes annually from Malta.<sup>44</sup>

## Supporting the Industrialization of Malta

The first request of the Maltese Government concerning the support Malta in the process of industrialisation arrived at the Embassy of Hungary to Rome on January 8 1972. The Maltese Ministry of Commerce asked the Hungarian Government to send a delegation of economists to Malta, which could help in establishing such industrial network which would be able to create as many workplaces as possible with the least investment. They said that *"they had empty factory-buildings which could be utilized for this purpose; furthermore, they would agree on establishing Hungarian or Hungarian-Maltese companies"*.<sup>45</sup>

The delegation of economists was sent by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce to Malta on February 14 1972, and they stayed there till February 18. This delegation consisted of company owners who talked with the Maltese representatives about exporting food, livestock, meat products and machines used in medicine and food production to Malta. However, the delegation informed the Maltese that Hungary could not help efficiently in establishing either medicine producing or poultry processing companies. But on the request of the Hungarian Dockyard and Crane Factory, the delegation made a business with the Maltese Drydock Company, according to which the Maltese agreed to

<sup>41</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/14

<sup>42</sup> *Népszabadság*, 23 September 1978.

<sup>43</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/31

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 004841/4

<sup>45</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1972, box 70, 00655/1

manufacture a 100-ton floating crane totalling \$ 15.000. Furthermore, we made a deal on importing silk yarn totalled \$ 800.000.<sup>46</sup>

The contribution to Malta's industrialization intensified at the end of 1970s. On August 2 1978 the Maltese proposed the establishment of a weapon factory in Malta with Hungarian and Libyan cooperation. At first, the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs thought it over because of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Namely, if the PN had won the elections, the influence of the NATO would have been increased.<sup>47</sup> Still, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent Sándor Torontáli to Malta, to negotiate with the Maltese economists. The talks were quite long, they lasted almost a month, from November 9 to December 2 1978. They elaborated on the quantity of the production, the capacity of production and financing. Sándor Torontáli proposed the establishment of a weapon-assembling factory, for which the Maltese would provide the building and the erecting shop, while Hungary would have been responsible for the technology, the training, the accessories, and any other tools and materials. This proved to be a serious and profitable deal for the Maltese who thought it would be really benefitting in the short run.<sup>48</sup>

After the visit of the Hungarian Prime Minister Frigyes Puja, Sándor Torontáli visited Malta again at the request of the Malta Development Corporation. There were two aims of his visit: one was to share his views about establishing a chocolate factory, the other was to make market research by proxy of the Intercooperation PLC.<sup>49</sup> As far as the chocolate factory was concerned the Hungarians approved his commission in February 1979, and he succeeded in arranging that the Maltese appointed Ferenc Mohos, head of the Department of Production at the Budapest Chocolate Factory, to be the manager of the factory.<sup>50</sup>

During the market research, Sándor Torontáli focused on the demand for livestock and meat products. In his despatch he reinforced his previous assumption according to which *"there was no correspondence between the local meat production and the import of meat products. As Hungary had 10.000 tons extra pork annually, this extra quantity could be exported to Malta not only to maintain the continuity of production, but also to avoid importing meat products."*<sup>51</sup> This pork-importing business was discussed during the visit of Agatha Barbara, too, as due to the African pig fever, in 1978, most of the pigs died in Malta. The AGROINVEST PLC. also contributed to the development of the Maltese meat industry, and it was ready to *"install a pig breeding network (planning, construction, providing breeding stock, running the network, technical consultation) to Malta on the grounds of a bilateral commercial agreement"*.<sup>52</sup>

All of this assistance proved to be useful for the Maltese, since *"these investments not only created new workplaces, and helped to reduce the unemployment rate, but they also contributed to the establishment of an export-oriented industry"*,<sup>53</sup> said Rezső Palotás the Ambassador of Hungary in Rome.

<sup>46</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1973, box 77, 00658/1

<sup>47</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 002197

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 002197/6-00114/8/78

<sup>49</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1979, box 90, 001204/4

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 004075

<sup>51</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 002300/6-00114/5/78

<sup>52</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1979, box 90, 001204/3

<sup>53</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 002393



## Cultural relations

The Maltese–Hungarian relations were characterized particularly by the diplomatic and economic cooperation, however, though not to the same extent, the cultural relations were also tight. They comprised of the following fields: film production, national holidays, media and education. Starting with film production, the Hungarian National Television Company got in touch with the Maltese Television Ltd. in the early 1970s. After the initial steps the Hungarians proposed to the Maltese to broadcast Hungarian short films or films in Malta.<sup>54</sup> However, the technical facilities did not make it possible at that time to send programmes directly. Besides broadcasting, Sándor Mátray and András Sugár, Hungarian film producers, planned to shoot a film in Malta which actually took place in November 1971. Moreover, the Maltese Television Ltd. sent us the highlights of the Malta–Hungary football match.<sup>55</sup> They asked us to send them the coverage of the return match which was on May 6 1972.<sup>56</sup>

The most important occasion of 1973, from Hungarian point of view, was the Hungarian Cultural Week in Malta which was organized by the Hungarian Academy in Rome. For the sake of the preparations a member of the Embassy of Hungary in Rome visited Malta on May 28 1973. The Hungarian delegate was welcomed by Agatha Barbara, Paul Xuereb Minister of Trade, Industry, Agriculture and Tourism and Anthony Abela Undersecretary. Agatha Barbara agreed to the organization of the Hungarian Cultural Week, and asked the Hungarians to focus on exhibiting Hungarian folklore products and showing Hungarian films. In addition, she asked the Hungarian delegate to invite Malta to the International Fair of Consumers Goods in Budapest that autumn.<sup>57</sup>

The Hungarian Cultural Week was opened by Agatha Barbara on February 28 1974. Hungarian paintings, goldsmith's craft and books were exhibited, and Hungarian films were also shown with English subtitles. Moreover, dr. József Bényi gave educational materials to the Maltese, on behalf of Károly Polinszky, Minister of Education and Public Education.<sup>58</sup>

In the field of education the Catholic Church always had a big influence in Malta. After the 1971-elections the PL came to an agreement with Archbishop Gonzi, therefore Mintoff gave a free hand in determining the educational material. In order to improve educational standards, Mintoff asked Hungary in 1972 to send them books, informational pamphlets, educational equipment, audiovisual materials and didactic films. We agreed to send them the asked materials and equipment, and the School Equipment Supplier and Seller Company put a package together was worth 50.000 Hungarian Forint.<sup>59</sup> Besides this help, we offered the Maltese students two scholarships for the academic year 1976/1977 from "*the stipendium fund of the developing countries*".<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1971, box 73, 001880/15

<sup>55</sup> It was a world cup qualification match, and was played on 14 October 1971.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 001880/31

<sup>57</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1973, box 77, 003227

<sup>58</sup> B. Hilary A. Clews F. S. C. (ed.): *The Malta Year Book 1975*. De La Salle Publications, Sliema, Malta, 1975. 71.

<sup>59</sup> On February 1 1972 1 HUF cost £ 72, so Hungary helped Malta with £ 694.444. Source: <http://www.mnb.hu/engine.aspx?page=arfolyamlekerdezes>

<sup>60</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/25



The Maltese–Hungarian cultural relations reached their apex on September 6 1978 when Rudolf Rónai, the chairman of the Institution of Cultural Relations, and Agatha Barbara signed the Treaty on Cultural and Scientific Cooperation in Budapest in the Institution of Cultural Relations.<sup>61</sup> This was the first treaty between the parties in this field, whose main aim was to observe each other's scientific development which implied "*the cooperation of the Maltese and Hungarian educational, cultural and art institutions, the cooperation of the scientific and research centres, the mutual visit and information exchange of the scientists, researchers, artists, and experts*".<sup>62</sup> The treaty covered every area of culture and science, such as education, literature, music, film industry, fine arts, cooperation of media, radio and television companies, strengthening relations in the UNESCO, organizing mutual sport activities, motivating the cooperation among the two countries' sport associations, and last but not least, boosting of tourism. The treaty was signed for five years, but it could be renewed.<sup>63</sup> After signing the treaty Agatha Barbara visited the Hungarian National Gallery and was taken sightseeing in Budapest.<sup>64</sup>

Concerning media and journalism, during the film production in November 1971, we invited a few Maltese journalists to Budapest, and we proposed to publish some articles of the *Notizie Ungheresi*<sup>65</sup> in Maltese newspapers.<sup>66</sup> Before the visit of Frigyes Puja, the Foreign Propaganda Department of the Press Department also worked out proposals to improve the cultural relations between the two countries. These proposals touched upon the development of media and informative relations, primarily to strengthen the relations of the Hungarian Scientific Institution and the Hungarian Television with their Maltese counterparts.<sup>67</sup>

To sum up the development Maltese–Hungarian relations in the 1960s and 1970s, they became stronger after the 1971-elections. The winner of these elections, the Malta Labour Party, under the direction of Dominic Mintoff, tried to loosen the relationship with the British, and wanted to break with Britain. Therefore, Mintoff tried to establish intergovernmental relations with as many countries as possible. These relations had a great importance in economic aspects, as in order to create a viable economy in Malta the Government of Malta needed foreign help. Mintoff sought for the help of the Government of the People's Republic of Hungary too, which was willing to support the Maltese aims. Although the relations evolved slowly in the early 1970s, at the end of the decade the diplomatic, economic and cultural relations were all quite tight which had a great importance for the Maltese, as on 31 March 1979 the British left the Grand Harbour, which meant that Malta had to stand on her own feet.

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<sup>61</sup> *Népszabadság*, 7 September 1978-

<sup>62</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1979, box 90, 005739/2

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 005739/3

<sup>64</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 004841/4

<sup>65</sup> It is an Italian newspaper.

<sup>66</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1971, box 73, 001880/15

<sup>67</sup> NAH, Office of the Foreign Minister, XIX-J-1-j, Malta 1978, box 91, 001570/8



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